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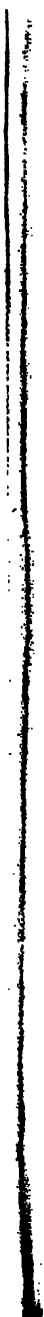


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# **HERE'S TO THE DAY**

**CHARLES AGNEW MacLEAN  
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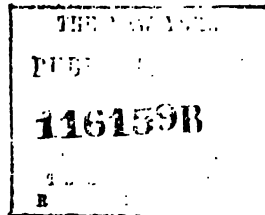
# *"Here's to the Day!"*

*by*

*Charles Agnew MacLean  
and  
Frank Blighton*

*New York  
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***HERE'S TO THE DAY***



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## CHAPTER I

### YOUNG MR. MORGAN DRINKS THE GERMAN WINE IN LUXEMBOURG

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**R**OBERT CAMERON, United States diplomatic representative in the sovereign state and ancient Duchy of Luxembourg, was having, what was unusual for him, an unpleasant dream. He was stretched out in his teakwood chair on the lawn between his gates and the solid old house which was a Schlosshaue in the days when there were robber barons and Luxembourg was part of the Bishopric of Treves. Now the house, at an absurdly reasonable rent, made a most comfortable dwelling for his sedate and modest household ménage.

Perhaps it was a bee from the neighboring geometrical beds of heliotrope and verbena which had come to inspect his gray hair and white mustache, and buzzed like a tiny airship past his ear. Perhaps it was something he read in the paper which, fallen from his knee, now lay neglected on

the grass beside him. It was a copy of the *London Times*, and Mr. Cameron, a conscientious, if obscure, diplomat, had been trying hard to work his way through a heavy leader on the warlike situation in the "near East" and the Balkans when sleep had overtaken him.

The leader writer of "the Thunderer" had hinted vaguely and guardedly at serious dangers to the peace of Europe through the present situation, but it was hard to follow and hard to understand what the writer was driving at. During the twenty-five years he had spent in the diplomatic service in Europe, Mr. Cameron had been accustomed to read such editorials almost daily, and at just this drowsy hour after luncheon. Hitherto the effect had always been the same: balmy, soothing sleep; but on this golden August afternoon the sleep was not soothing, and was accompanied by dreams.

Such dreams! Burning houses collapsing in red chaos, and women and children screaming and flying and overborne. Swarms of helmeted men with streaming standards borne before them sweeping up vast hillsides and borne back again. The air darkened with clouds of smoke with the dim shadows of gigantic dirigibles and dragonfly monoplane athwart the sky, mountains and hillside spouting fire. All the military glitter and equipment that he had seen in a dozen capitals—at Potsdam, at Petersburg, at Vienna, in Paris;

Cossacks with their wild horses, German uhlans and Hussars of Death in their black domains, gray-overcoated Russian infantry and French chasseurs à cheval with horsehair plumes in their shining helmets whirled before him in a vast and terrible welter! A hundred battle flags and heraldic ensigns! Cæsar's eagles, and Prussia's double eagle, the British lion, the flaming tri-color, lances and pennons, men and horses, bayonets and swarming field guns overturned in heaps! It was Armageddon. The nations of the earth were locked together in a terrific death grapple!

And then—the bee sent its minatory challenge a little too close to his ear, one sheet of the *Times* which still hung on his knee slid to the grass with a tiny crackle, the dream collapsed, and Mr. Cameron rose to his feet and blinked in the sunlight. Perhaps thirty seconds of earthly time would encompass the duration of the dream, but to Mr. Cameron then it seemed that he had lived for ages in that horrible nightmare land into which many a diplomat has strayed unwillingly in his sleeping hours.

It was reassuring to see the tranquillity and calm of the afternoon. Behind him across the lawn was the dignified yellow-stone Château des Herthereux, so cheap to rent, so comfortable—and, as his niece Charlotte had often pointed out, so inconvenient. Before him were the ornamental French iron gates of his domain, and beyond

that the still stretch of the Boulevard Adalbert which, in a white line, fringed with the dark green of linden trees, stretched all the way from the edge of the rocky height, past the park and into the very heart of the beautiful, sleepy, orderly little city of Luxembourg.

Mr. Cameron stepped through the gates and beyond, reflecting that a man might fire a cannon down this thoroughfare without hitting any one, when a black motor car came into view beneath the lindens, slowed suddenly as it passed him, and, sounding a warning Claxon, swung in through the gates. The rear seat was filled with various baggages, including a bag of golf clubs and a leather case for tennis rackets with just enough room for a very tall, broad, clear-skinned young man, who leaped out as the car stopped and came toward him with outstretched hand.

"Fairfax Morgan!" said Mr. Cameron. "I'm glad to see you. I didn't expect you so soon. Tell your man to put the car up in the garage, straight past the house about two hundred feet—he can't miss it. There's a room ready for you."

Morgan was not only tall, but good looking. A fine type of American, quietly good-humored, not at all assertive in bearing.

"Cornelius," he said to his man, "put her up and get the stuff out."

Cornelius was short, well made, brown-haired,

with a mouth that gave the impression of one used to deal in few, brief words.

"Sure, doc," he said, "I'll put her up. What did you think I was going to do with her?" He made the engine buzz louder preparatory to throwing in the clutch.

"And say—Cornelius!" Morgan raised his voice.

Cornelius moderated the buzz and opened his mouth a little at one side. "Yee-ah!" he said.

"You'd better take out those spark plugs and look at them. She was missing back there at Spa."

Cornelius half turned round in his seat with an expression indicating that speech made him weary.

"On the dead level, doc," he said, "them plugs is all right. You amachoor drivers——"

"If you won't do it I will," said Morgan.

"Oh, I'll *do* it," said Cornelius.

Morgan took a step toward him.

"On the dead level, I'll look at them, doc," said Cornelius again. "I'll do it. On the dead!"

As he vanished Morgan turned back to Mr. Cameron.

"Fairfax," said Cameron, "I wouldn't have that man a day. He's the most impudent——"

Morgan's face expanded. "He's all right. It's only his way. He's an East Side boy, and he hasn't much polish. But say—Mr. Cameron, this

is a fine place you've got here. I'm glad I came."

"I can live here," said Cameron, "more comfortably on four thousand a year than I could on twenty thousand in New York. The rent of this is three hundred dollars a year. And it's a good climate—and there's peace and tranquillity here. It's a rest after New York or Washington."

"How are you?" said Morgan. "And how's Charlotte?"

"She's all right. She doesn't like it here much. How's the golf and how's the tennis?"

"Golf, rotten. Tennis, fair. I got a couple of mugs in England. I'm going to try it out at Cannes and Nice. Where's Charlotte now?"

"Out behind the house. Run along and see her."

They shook hands again, and Mr. Cameron watched Morgan as he went off. He felt satisfied that Fairfax was the right man for Charlotte. Charlotte had some high German connections on her mother's side, but Mr. Cameron felt that he would rather see her married to an American.

Morgan had money enough and not too much—he had always been a hard worker—not brilliant perhaps, but sound and sure to win a position for himself as a surgeon. He worked hard and played hard, and was kindly and capable—altogether Mr. Cameron's idea of an American gentleman.

His only weak point was that he seemed a

little afraid of Charlotte, and that he stood a lot of infernal impudence from that intolerable chauffeur whom he had rescued from a life alternating between the box of a taxicab and the prize ring—Cornelius Healy.

Healy firmly believed that Morgan was the most generous man and greatest doctor in the world and that he had saved his life when he had patched up two broken ribs for him. He paid his debt of gratitude by treating Morgan as an equal, not a superior, and by a stanch and unspoken loyalty.

Morgan was thinking of neither Healy nor Mr. Cameron, but of Charlotte. He found her beside a tea table, under the trees. She was rather tall, slim, and it was easy, as Morgan had often found it, to trace the two racial strains in her. There was something still and dreamy and romantic in her. Morgan was always afraid that she might fall helplessly in love with some dark, magnetic, but unpleasant stranger. And also there was something brisk and practical and nervous. Her gestures were too sudden and flashing in their grace for the pure-blooded Teuton, her face too light and vivacious and too irregular for an un-mixed strain of German blood.

She wasn't ruddy enough for a German nor pale enough for an American. Her transparent blue eyes were set wide apart. There was just a touch of prominence to the cheek bones and the



faintest suggestion of delicate angularity in the whole face. Her wavy dead brown hair covered what Morgan thought the noblest part of a wide and capable forehead, for he remembered her when she was quite a little girl and wore the hair pushed back with a round comb.

If those scientists who years ago classified temperaments had recognized such a thing as the lymphatic-nervous constitution Charlotte would have typified it. In dress she had always possessed a genius for a "chic" and grace that avoided the strikingly smart and fashionable. She had a decided trend toward thrift and economy, a lot of sound generosity and unselfishness, and at fifteen or so had been very religious—but this had dropped away from her as she grew older. And over and above all this, she had a strong sense of humor.

"Fairfax," she said, "it's good to see you."

Morgan had held both her hands a second before he realized that there was a gentleman standing near by. She remembered her other guest at the same moment.

"Count von Hollman—Doctor Morgan," she said.

Von Hollman straightened, his heels clicked, he bowed stiffly from the waist.

"I have hear-rd of Doctor Morgan," he said. "I am pleased to know him." There was just enough roll to the "r," just enough throaty full-

ness to the tone to show that his vocal organs had been used to German speech before they had been trained to French or English. He did not offer his hand; and Morgan, a little confused, gave a slouchy imitation of the military bow, and stared curiously.

Count Otto von Hollman was worth more than a hasty glance anywhere. In the first place he was evidently and palpably what Morgan described as "a great swell." It was nothing that Hollman "put on" or was aware of at all. It was an utterly unconscious, and, because of that, really an arresting and commanding atmosphere of superiority and authority—hard to define, but easy to apprehend when one meets it. There was something about him that made him a man hard to disregard or ignore and impossible to ridicule. In the second place he was sufficiently distinguished as a physical type to arrest attention anywhere. Morgan immediately recognized him as the dark, magnetic individual whose influence on Charlotte he long had dreaded. Only Hollman was not at all unpleasant—decidedly otherwise, to a man as well as a woman.

Morgan towered above him by at least four inches; but in spite of that Hollman's high, square shoulders, his narrow, well-poised head, his high forehead, and his general look of lean, long efficiency made him look much taller than he was. Descended though he was from the high-

est and purest Prussian blood, his pallor, his obliquely set dark eyes, his smooth dark hair gave something Slavic, almost Asiatic, to his appearance. He was clothed in the correct flannels of an Englishman, but no one would ever have taken him for an Englishman anywhere. Morgan had just time to note his slim white hands with their long, tapering fingers when the count waved one of these hands to a table behind him on which was set a large silver bowl, a platter of cracked ice, and sundry bottles.

"You have come at the right time, Mr. Morgan," he said. "I am making a May bowl. The prinzeßin—Miss Charlotte says that it can only be made in the spring—but I have some of the Waldmeister here in this little package—and we shall all taste it."

"Yes, we'll all taste it." This came from Mr. Cameron, who had joined them and who was helping to divest Morgan of the long duster he wore and to relieve him of his motoring gauntlets.

Morgan sank into the chair hospitably pushed beneath him, and when he wasn't looking at Charlotte watched the evolutions of the count and his bowl of May wine. Helping him in his task was the Cameron butler—also North German, but of a decidedly different type from the count.

Schwarz, the butler, was a fine, upstanding figure of a man who might have weighed two hundred pounds, heavy-handed, rosy-cheeked, and, in

spite of his name, blue-eyed and decidedly blond. When gazing on the world at large his eyes were good-humored and kindly, but at the present moment they were fixed on Von Hollman, and were those of a faithful hound.

Had Morgan watched the brewing of the bowl more and the two who brewed it less, his behavior on this particular afternoon might have been different. But his eyes were, in spite of himself, hungry for the sight of Charlotte's, and as Charlotte's often left his to watch the count, Morgan saw little but the two.

Into the bowl went herbs and ice and sliced cucumber and brandy and champagne. Finally it was completed, and Schwarz passed around goblets that held much more than they appeared to hold.

Mr. Cameron drained his, and handed it back with a loud smack. Charlotte barely touched hers to her lips, gazing at Hollman the while. And Hollman, looking into those blue cornflower eyes and reading in them no one knows what, drained his to the dregs, and handed it to Schwarz, who promptly refilled it.

Fairfax Morgan, both by habit and inclination, was temperate—not to say abstemious. His training as a physician, his experience as a man, his physical fineness and condition as an athlete made even an occasional indulgence in alcohol distasteful to him. But something in the golden

sunshine that flickered beneath the lime trees and glanced through the amber of the wine, something in the presence of Charlotte, whom he had not seen for months, and some uneasy, unworthy jealousy stirred in him by her evident respect for Von Hollman made him drain the glass three times before he finally waved the butler away from him.

He could feel the stir in his blood, the excitement—and if his eyes or the wine did not deceive him—the count, who had drunk as deeply and did not look like a drinking man, was similarly affected. His dark, oblique eyes had taken on a darker gleam, and Morgan noticed that one thing that marked them as peculiar was that the pupils were much larger than in the normal man. Something masterful, commanding, almost cruel, began to show under the suavity of his countenance—and to show a little also in his speech.

The conversation engineered at first by Mr. Cameron had gone from climate and weather to athletics and more specifically to golf and tennis, and Charlotte had announced that she fully expected Morgan to win the tournament at Nice. Wilding and Brookes might enter, as Mr. Cameron had suggested, but Fairfax would win the tournament, according to Charlotte.

"So!" said Von Hollman, holding out the glass for the butler's ladle to refill. "I would be willing to bet you a hundred guineas—five hundred dol-

lars—in spite of the Prinzessin Charlotte—that you will not win the tournament at Nice.”

“I don’t bet on myself,” said Morgan shortly.

He was in serious doubt whether it was he or the count who had tarried too long with the May wine, but he knew that something was wrong. He found it impossible to take his eyes from the count’s, and he seemed to see in those inky pools—or was it the horrible, alcoholic, unhygienic concoction he had swallowed?—something confident, menacing, and deadly.

“Pardon,” said the count, toying with his glass. “I am ignorant perhaps of the etiquette of the sport—but suppose I were to say that I would bet you five hundred dollars that there would be no tennis tournament at all at Nice.”

“It’s scheduled!” said Morgan mildly. “I have the date somewhere.”

“Scheduled!” The count snapped his tapering fingers. “Pouf! You English! You Americans! You are children. What does your poet say? ‘Young barbarians—all at play.’”

The evident and growing arrogance in Von Hollman’s manner would have been offensive in one less finely strung. There was something keen and flashing about it—nothing coarsely brutal. Mr. Cameron, sitting very straight in his chair, muttered something about “other barbarians” behind his white mustache, but Morgan preserved his good-natured calm. He saw that it was not only

the wine, but something intoxicating in the admiring eyes of Charlotte, that had gone to the count's head, and his momentary feeling of jealousy was driven out by a sort of wonderment and admiration at the sight of such a lordly buck trumpeting and displaying his points for the benefit of the doe.

"I take it," he said, "that you don't think much of athletics."

"Your athletics"—the count curled up his little dark mustache, "golf, tennis, cricket. The games of children! What use are they?"

"They keep a man fit."

"Fit for what? To eat—and drink and sleep."

"What *are* athletics for, anyway?" It was Charlotte who spoke.

The count turned to her. "To make a man master of his body as of his mind. To teach him to fire a gun, to ride a horse, to swim a stream, to grapple with an enemy hand to hand. To make him fit to fight for himself, his wife, and his country. \ Come, Monsieur Tennis Player. I will show you something." He addressed Morgan as he rose.

Surely, thought Morgan afterward, there was something peculiarly intoxicating in that May bowl—and something maddening, too, in the soft blue eyes of the beautiful Charlotte who sat between them. Afterward Morgan congratulated himself that he had not been the aggressor and

had been a little the saner of the two—but, watching the tense, supple figure of the count, he felt his anger slowly rising and his hair strangely stirring and bristling up on the back of his neck. There was something in the quiet garden that seemed to breathe of ancient racial animosities, of feuds centuries old.

“Catch my right hand,” said Von Hollman. “Set your left foot against my left foot. Brace yourself. Try to make me move from my stand—I shall try to do the same by you. You are the larger man—a professed athlete—after the English fashion. Let us see.”

The sport that Hollman thus invited him to was one that Morgan had seen practiced from childhood under the totally erroneous name of “Japanese wrestling.” Its possibilities as a game are decidedly limited, and it has the sole merit of being the one athletic sport of a strenuous nature that may be practiced in a hall bedroom. It gives an enormous advantage to weight and big bones, and accordingly Morgan faced his smaller antagonist with no feeling other than a mild wonder and curiosity.

Once he grasped the hand of Von Hollman, however, a change came over the spirit of his dreams. The fingers that looked so white and tapering seemed to be made of tempered steel, and they clasped Morgan’s like a vise. Von Hollman’s body seemed to be made of steel springs.



For a moment they swayed, first to right, then to left. Then Von Hollman's lithe body turned. Without shifting his feet his whole torso swung about, so that he was facing rearward and that Morgan's hand clasped in his was over his right shoulder. Suddenly he bent forward and pulled hard on Morgan's hand, and as suddenly Morgan was lifted clear from the earth and tumbled over on the turf.

The German butler helped him to arise, and Hollman had turned and was bending toward Charlotte when Mr. Cameron asserted himself.

"This is the most ridiculous performance I have ever seen among grown men," he said. "Fairfax, you ought to be old enough to know better!"

Fairfax Morgan, tumbled and disheveled, felt there was something of injustice in his reproof as addressed to him, but said nothing. Hollman turned on the old gentleman, and laid his hands on his shoulders.

"My dear friend," he said, "we are not all as wise as you. Forgive us. Let us drink another glass."

He pressed a goblet of the wine into Cameron's hand; and the latter, after a moment's hesitation, drained it. He himself, taking another glass from the hand of the butler, raised it to his lips.

"To the day!" he said in German. As he spoke, a slow rumble in the air, a quivering of the ground beneath their feet, a brief, breathless

pause and then another slow, menacing rumble seemed to emphasize his toast. The butler was standing straight and still like a soldier, his eyes fixed on the count.

"That's a dynamite explosion," said Morgan, "or else it's cannon."

"My friend, I think it is cannon," said the count. And as he spoke another slow, sullen rumble filled the air.

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CHAPTER II

AND LEARNS THAT THE MAY  
BOWL IS A POTENT  
BEVERAGE

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A LITTLE later Morgan and Charlotte stood together on the stairs within the old yellow-stone château.

"Isn't he nice?" said Charlotte. Her eyes were fixed on Morgan, and she seemed dying to have him agree with her.

"Yes," said Morgan grudgingly.

"And isn't he *strong*?"

"I suppose so. But that was a trick. I dare say I'm stronger than he is."

"Oh, I don't know!" Charlotte shook her head. A beam of sunlight fell across her, and there was something ethereally blond and innocent about the back-drawn hair, the blue eyes, and the fair, straight-featured face.

"I wish I were as strong as he is," she said.

"I'm glad you're not."

"Do you think I'm anything like him?"

"Not a bit."

"We're both German—you know—at least I am on one side—and he's a prince—and I'm a princess if I want to be."

Morgan stepped back from her. "All right, princess," he said. "Go to your prince. You don't need an ordinary American like me."

"Oh, yes, I do, Fairfax," said Charlotte. "Only I've heard the greatest lot about my mother's connections here—and I really *am* a princess. But what do you think of Count von Hollman?"

"He's all right," said Morgan rather unenthusiastically.

"He's strong, anyway," insisted Charlotte. "I wish I could throw you about like that. I'm fairly strong though—for a woman. Just see!"

She bent forward and flexed the biceps muscle. Morgan reached forward and grasped it. It was strong, but it was the strength of a woman, a round, firm arm. Touching it thrilled him. Her face was near to his, and her blue eyes were like blue lakes in which a man might drown—happily. Morgan afterward insisted it was an accident—the wine may have had something to do with it. Charlotte herself admitted that it was utterly unlike Fairfax, that she had never been in her life so much surprised and disappointed in a man. But at any rate, instead of thinking of her strength, he thought only of her freshness and

sweetness, and felt himself tumbling off a precipice to plunge into the clear blue depths of her eyes. He kissed her on the lips, and for a moment it seemed that she kissed him, too.

"Fairfax Morgan!" She had drawn away from him and was glaring at him.

"It was an accident," said Morgan.

"Accident! How dare——" She fell silent, and her face changed from outraged dignity to a formal smile.

"Count Otto," she said, "we are still talking of sport and athletics."

Von Hollman had entered the hall behind them.

"Sport!" he said. "Children playing on the edge of a precipice."

As he spoke the château seemed rocked to its base, the windows rattled in a low, sullen reverberation of sound.

"Thunder!" said Charlotte.

"Yes," said Von Hollman, "I think there's a thunderstorm brewing, although the sky seems clear enough."

"You evidently don't think much of modern sport," said Morgan, who had not recovered his composure quite as readily as had Charlotte.

"No, I don't." Hollman's face was suave and ingratiating, his face had lost the savage arrogance that had shone through it a little earlier in the afternoon. There might have been something

tolerantly patronizing in his smile—and then again it might have been Morgan's fancy. There was something about the man Morgan could not help liking and admiring—something solid and masculine and magnetic.

"You don't believe that Waterloo was won on the cricket fields of England," said Morgan.

"I don't believe that it was won in England or on the cricket field or by the English. I believe that it was won by Blücher and the Prussians on the field of Waterloo. As for sport, cricket, football, tennis—they are charming, if you will, but impractical. There's something feminine, almost effeminate, about athletics."

"Feminine!" said Charlotte. "You surprise me! I thought that athletics of all sorts were the very top pitch of masculine virility."

Von Hollman lit a cigarette. "Look at the Greeks and the Romans," he said. "Every nation represents a principle, every nation is either masculine or feminine in its genius. The Greeks were feminine, they were the greatest race of amateur athletes the world has ever seen. Did the Romans practice athletics? No, they had slaves to contest before them, but reserved their own strength for the real business of life, for warfare. They conquered and dominated Greece as the masculine must always conquer and dominate the feminine. The French to-day are feminine. The greatest boxer in the world to-day is a

Frenchman, but what of the French army? The athletes of the air, the aviators who perform the most astonishing and useless tricks are Frenchmen, but where are the French Zeppelins? And what is the present state of the French navy?"

"And America, Count Otto," said Charlotte, "is it masculine or feminine?"

"Oh, feminine," said the count, "and altogether charming." His manner as he said it, the delicate inclination of his head, his eyes as they rested on Charlotte's made the general statement seem like a personal compliment. Morgan saw the flush rising in Charlotte's cheeks, and her eyes brighten.

"What do you call the English?" he suggested. "They go in for athletics. Are they feminine as a race?"

"The English," said the count slowly, "are neither masculine nor feminine. As a race they have no sex at all. Their lack of positive qualities has deceived the rest of the world and given it a false impression of English force and English efficiency. Their British empire will dissipate one day like a mist before the sun, and historians will one day write down the English as the most over-rated people in the whole history of mankind."

As he spoke a small boy with a blue uniform covered with many rows of brass buttons appeared on a large bicycle coming up the path to the house. The German butler met him at the door

and received from him a pink telegram which he handed to Count Hollman on a silver tray.

With a word of apology to Charlotte, Hollman opened the dispatch and pored over its contents for a moment.

His eyes seemed to grow brighter and steadier, his whole face more commanding and intent. He drew in his breath with a slow, hissing sound, then suddenly his figure became tense and upright, his heels clicked together.

He half turned and held the telegram to the butler. Morgan could see enough of it to realize that it was written in code, but its effect on the butler was so astonishing as to draw his attention from the message itself.

"Carl!" said Hollman in a low tone. "*Sehen Sie!*" Carl's china-blue eyes, at first dull and fishy, actually flashed, and for a moment seemed to take on the expression of the count's. His figure became upright and rigid, his heels clicked together, his hand came up, palm forward, stiff and rigid in the Prussian military salute.

Von Hollman wheeled from him suddenly, and turned to the other two. "My regrets, prinzeßin! The business is urgent that calls me, I must go at once. I hope that we may meet again—we shall surely."

"Oh, surely!" said Charlotte softly. "*Auf wiedersehen.*"



Ten minutes later, Hollman, in his own car, with his own chauffeur, took his departure. Charlotte watched the dust of the vanishing machine with some regret. Von Hollman had interested her, his sudden departure puzzled and annoyed her. She hated to have her plans upset, hated sudden changes, and this evening, which was to become a memorable one with every one in the Château des Herthereux, brought her one more annoyance.

Carl, the butler, had disappeared. The discovery was made an hour later. No one had seen him go, but he was not to be found, and a great many of his belongings had gone with him, while his trunk was locked and corded in a corner of his neat little room. All the horrible lithographs which Carl loved, even to the picture of the kaiser, were gone from the walls and had vanished.

The deserted little room which Carl had occupied for so many months sent an unpleasant chill through Charlotte, and as she went slowly down the winding stairs to join the others in the dining-room, she was conscious of a feeling of impending disaster, a sensation that the whole world was waiting breathless for some impending calamity—a feeling that she could not analyze or explain, but could not shake off.

There was a sort of gloom and silence brooding over the little dinner table, and once or twice the

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LEARNS MAY BOWL IS A BEVERAGE

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desultory conversation was broken by a low reverberation—something like distant thunder, but more unpleasant and minatory in sound than any thunder they had ever heard before.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THE CHATEAU DES HER- THEREUX HAS A VIS- ITOR FROM THE SKIES

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**T**HE Château des Herthereux stands in the outskirts of Luxembourg City, on the Boulevard Adalbert, which stretches west till it hits the main road north and south. The château has or had at that time considerable grounds of its own. It is on a level with the boulevard in the front, but in the rear it terminates in an abrupt, rocky declivity from which one may overlook the low town of Luxembourg with its narrow streets and crowded, picturesque houses. From the boulevard to the edge of the cliff is a distance of almost a thousand feet, part of which is taken up by the house and its stable, but the rearward end of which is a fine, grassy slope, tilted downward slightly toward the edge of the cliff.

Morgan's bedroom was in a turret with a winding stair beneath. It afforded him a private en-

trance of his own to the lawn. He felt restless and uneasy. Mr. Cameron was busy playing his favorite game of solitaire and was not to be disturbed. Charlotte had vanished somewhere; and Morgan, thrown on his own resources, finally filled a pipe and went outside. He wanted some sort of companionship, and he thought he might run into Healy, who, in spite of Cameron's opinion of him, was a man worth talking to.

There was no moon so far that night, and the air was heavy with the scent of the late-blooming roses for which Luxembourg is famous.

Morgan, puffing meditatively, walked slowly back, past the garage to the edge of the cliff, and stood for a while looking down at the dim-lit town beneath him. Then, feeling the necessity of some exercise, he paced the length of the lawn again, and stood at the gates looking out across the boulevard.

The hemlock hedge that separated the ground from the road was almost his own height and partly screened it. Morgan was held there, however, by a strange sound, a sort of shuffling of many feet that seemed to come down the road from the westward.

So peculiar was the sound, so unlike anything he had ever heard before that he was on the point of stepping through the gate and looking along the road when a hand was laid on his arm. It was Healy.

"Hold on a minute, doc," said Healy in a low tone. "Just keep quiet and look. There's something doing here that's going to be a surprise to somebody in the boig of Luxemboig."

Morgan looked in the direction Healy indicated. Out of the gloom a gigantic figure slowly took shape as it drew nearer. It was a man mounted on a great, tall horse. The man himself was tall and made taller by the helmet with the square top which he wore. In one hand he carried a long lance with a little pennon at the head. The horse moved at a fast, shuffling walk, and as he passed them they could see the rider's uniform.

He was a German uhlan, slouching forward in his saddle, leaning a little on the long, black lance whose butt rested in his stirrup iron. They could see from the movements of his head that he was glancing keenly to left and right as well as down the road ahead of him toward the center of the city. Only the fact that they stood behind the hedge and were looking out through its branches saved them from his scrutiny.

For the moment Morgan could scarcely believe his eyes. It was like some ghastly phantom of the night, this Prussian uhlan in the streets of quiet Luxembourg—Luxembourg whose neutrality had been guaranteed by the powers.

It could only mean one thing—war! And war was impossible. Mr. Cameron at dinner had said it was impossible, that the concentration of wealth

in the hands of a few great financial interests like those of the Rothschilds made such a thing as a war between the powers in the nineteenth century inconceivable. They might talk and threaten and argue about Slav and Teuton, but look how things had quieted down after the Agadir incident! The bankers had put the screws on the powers in that case and they would do it again.

And yet, here before his very eyes, was a sight that even to Morgan, who had only a superficial knowledge of politics in Europe, meant nothing less than a general war. A Prussian uhlan in the streets of Luxembourg!

A dozen wild thoughts flashed through Morgan's mind. It might be some one masquerading; his eyes might deceive him. But now as the German soldier passed within a foot of them it was evident that it was no vision and no masquerade. The dusty uniform with the yellow facings, the black lance with its little snapping pennon, the short blond mustache, and the heavy, brooding countenance lit up for a second by the lights of the château gate—all these had something in them terribly grim and real.

The uhlan passed, and disappeared into the darkness, the shuffling of his horse growing fainter. Suddenly Morgan felt Healy's grip tighten on his arm as another horseman appeared, exactly like the first. Then came two more, rid-

ing side by side, then after that, at a little space, five in a group.

Morgan realized that he was witnessing the advance of some portion of an army and that this cavalry vidette was an advance guard. Speechless, almost breathless, he and Healy stood side by side, watching while a squad of horsemen passed. Five minutes later the columns of infantry appeared.

They were Bavarian troops with fore-and-aft hats and gray uniforms. Before them marched trumpeters and drummers with odd little, flat German drums, but the trumpets and drums were silent, and the only sound was the stealthy, quick shuffle of many feet in the dusty road, and a low, indistinct murmur made up of the muffled jingling of many accouterments.

It was like a horrible dream. The infantry moved in an uncanny silence and with an uncanny celerity. Rank after rank of bronzed faces swung into the shaft of light from the gate lamps, rank after rank of polished rifle barrels flashed back the light before the darkness swallowed them again.

How long it took, how many men passed, neither Morgan nor Healy was able to closely estimate, but at length the lamps shone on the pennons of a rear guard of uhlans, followed by several great wagons with six horses attached to each.

The shuffling faded farther and farther down the road. The murmur and jingle died into silence, the shadowy forms of the great wains bulked big for a moment or so in the darkness and then blended into the night even as the creaking of their wheels died away.

It seemed as if they had watched the passing of a phantom host. The road was vacant and quiet once more, the rose scent still hung heavy in the air, the sight that they had just seen seemed an impossibility.

"That's war all right," said Healy. "Those fellows ain't on a practice march or out for a picnic. That's why his nibs, the strong-arm fellow you was wrassling with, went off in such a hurry. And that's where the Dutch butler's gone. They've gone to their regiments."

Morgan turned toward the château. He had some idea of telling Mr. Cameron of what he had seen when he saw the lights suddenly flash up in Mr. Cameron's office, and he realized that Cameron must be already getting the news by wire. At the same time from the air above him came a familiar sound, a drone something like the noise made by a boy drawing a wooden stick along an iron paling.

Morgan had been up once or twice at Hempstead, and could have made a living as an aviator had he needed to. He knew the sound, and a moment later he was able to identify the machine



which came sweeping down upon the lawn of the Château des Herthereux.

It was a Bleriot monoplane, and poised now at a tremendous height above the house and city. Suddenly the engine was shut off, the rapid succession of explosions ceased, and Healy and Morgan were treated to the sight of one of the most thrilling and stirring volplanes that was ever executed anywhere. Out of the dark sky the plane seemed to fall like a shot, upward it circled again, carried on by the tremendous momentum of the drop. Again it circled, and again it swung downward. They were watching the evolutions of an aviator who knew his business and had perfect control of his machine even with its motive power shut out.

Another swooping circle and another plunge downward, and both Healy and Morgan were dashing for the lawn behind the barn. The aviator must have picked out this little sloping stretch of green from the air above with a night glass and aimed his frail craft at it with unerring judgment.

As Morgan and Healy, running side by side, passed the barn they came upon him standing beside his machine, which stood apparently undamaged on the unscarred turf. He was a lithe, square-shouldered, athletic figure. He flashed a pocket light in their direction.

"*Tiens!*" he said in a low, ringing voice.

*"C'est Luxembourg, n'est ce pas? Neutral territory?"*

"This is Luxembourg, and German troops are crossing it now."

"Ah! The party down the road." He spoke English rapidly and with but a slight accent. "They passed here. Only an outpost. The main division came on the railroad. They are holding the station and the Hotel de Ville now. But you, messieurs, your nationality? English?"

"American," said Morgan.

Something about the tension of the fingers relaxed, and the aviator came closer.

"I am fortunate," he said. "If a detachment of uhlans find me here I shall swing at the end of a rope. I am a spy—according to them. I am not in the regular French army, and I will not even have the privilege of being shot."

As they drew closer to him they saw that in spite of the quietness of his tone his brow was beaded with sweat, the hair was wet and matted on his bare head, and his face was working with excitement. He carried a big, flat automatic pistol in one hand, the pocket flash in the other, and, suspended before him by a strap about his neck, was a pair of field glasses.

"It is not only my own life that is at stake, gentlemen—it is France itself," he said. "The German armies are at our throat. War is not yet declared, but it is already war. If Paris is to be

saved I must leave here and get to Liège to-night. I have no petrol here. My name is Etienne Martin. I was formerly in the employ of the National Telegraphique before I became an aviator. I have many American friends. If France were the aggressor perhaps I would not ask your help so confidently. But I must have petrol."

"How much have we?" asked Morgan, turning to Healy.

"We have enough to help him out—but listen!"

From far off somewhere in the direction of the city came the ringing tones of a bugle. Then another sound from the air smote their ears. It was like the rustling of mighty wings. Over the eastern horizon a long, dark form, lit here and there and with a restless searchlight playing from it, swung up against the sky.

"A Zeppelin!" said Martin. "We must get the machine hidden before that light picks us up."

"That carriage house will hold it," said Healy. "Get a hold of the machine, you, doc, and you, Frenchy, and push it in. I'll push open the doors."

It was Healy's prompt thinking that stirred them to action. The chauffeur himself pushed the sliding doors back, and shoved one or two vehicles back into the barn, while Martin and Morgan guided the light machine from either side. A moment later it was safe within the inclosure which just gave space enough for its wide wings,

and the door was swung shut on it. Healy snapped a padlock on the door.

"Nobody will search that barn without chopping down the door," he said. "It's an American lock, and I've got the key. And now you'd better get young Frenchy out of the way. That transatlantic balloon will be here with its flash-light in about two minutes."

Morgan led the way to the turret door which he had left open an hour before. From above, from the windows of his darkened bedchamber they could look out on the lawn. The great Zeppelin, long, somber, cigar-shaped, and incredibly fast, was almost above them now. Its powerful searchlight brought into tremendous vividness and relief everything its rays touched. They could see it move across the lawn—a great disk of fiery bluish white—and show nothing there but the orderly flower beds and the close-cropped grass.

The aeroplane had landed lightly after its terrible drop, and its rubber-tired wheels had left no track. Across the face of the barn passed the disk of the searchlight and showed it locked, still, and deserted.

Over the face of the château flashed the light, full in their eyes as it passed their window. For perhaps five minutes it searched the grounds, the boulevard, the cliff at the other side, and the roofs of the town below. Then the great balloon al-

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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tered its course and swung off farther west and south.

For the moment at least Etienne Martin was safe. And in that moment Morgan had time to realize what he had done in aiding an enemy of Germany, and some of the dangers threatening Healy and himself, even his uncle and Charlotte, perhaps, because of it.

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## CHAPTER IV

### MR. CAMERON SHOWS THAT HE IS A DIPLOMAT

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**T**HE drone of the Zeppelin grew fainter in the distance, its dark bulk faded from the eastern sky. Healy, less imaginative and less concerned with the great world drama that lay behind the present excitement, was cooler and more practical than the other two. He drew down the curtains to the three windows of the turret chamber, and, striking a match, lit the heavy lamp that hung from brazen chains in the center of the room.

Etienne Martin was standing with his arms folded across his breast in an attitude very Gallic and indeed theatrical. There were deep lines of fatigue on his face, his shoulders drooped a little, but his head was carried jauntily.

"Gentlemen," he said, "it is for you to say whether I live or die—and whether France lives or dies. A few gallons of petrol, for which I will gladly pay any price you ask, a level space where I may start my engine

and take the air—that is all I ask. And if you cannot grant it, it means ruin and worse than death to France, and death by the rope for me! Have you ever been in Paris?” He gesticulated as he continued: “Have you ever seen the Bois de Boulogne? Do you want to see it white with the tents of the Prussian troopers? Do you desire to see the Arc de Triomphe stained with our blood and gay with the Prussian battle flags?” He shook his clenched hands in Morgan’s face.

“What I want to see and don’t want to see,” said Morgan, “isn’t the only factor in the case. Mr. Cameron, whose hospitality you and I enjoy at the present moment, is the American diplomatic representative to Luxembourg. You realize, of course, that what happens in his house is a different matter from the happenings in the house of an ordinary private citizen. I don’t know much about this war, but I do know that the United States is neutral and going to stay neutral, and that it is up to Mr. Cameron to preserve that attitude. This is a case for him to decide. Healy, will you be good enough to ask Mr. Cameron to do me the favor to come up here if he is disengaged? And you, Mr. Martin, you might as well sit down.”

Healy vanished, and the aviator collapsed in a limp heap on the edge of the bed. There was something pathetic in his extreme weariness, his anxiety and excitement. His face, handsome and

attractive enough in a dark way, was continually working, and his hands were restless.

Mr. Cameron himself appeared at the door a moment later with Healy at his elbow.

"I understand from this person, Fairfax," he said, "that you have a French aviator here. I have just received advices to the effect that Russia and Germany are at war with each other and that Austria and Russia are at war. At present I know of no state of war between Germany and France."

Martin stood up. "You know," he said, "that Luxembourg has been invaded and is now being held by Prussian troops. A squad of uhlans and a battalion of Bavarian infantry passed your own door half an hour ago. What right have they here?"

"It's not my business what they are doing here," said Mr. Cameron. "I know, however, that it is none of my business to be harboring in a house, which is in effect the United States embassy to Luxembourg, a French spy."

Martin dropped on the bed again, and clasped his head with his hands. He uttered some exclamation in French and swayed from side to side.

"That guy is goin' nutty," said Healy. "He's all in! He'll be dead to the woild in a minute."

Mr. Cameron turned on him irritably. "Go and get him a drink, then," he said, and as Healy went he faced Morgan again.

"This is a singularly unfortunate circumstance,



Fairfax," he said. "I don't know that I blame you, inasmuch as this man had committed no crime and his life was at stake. Anyway, I have made up my mind. It may cost me a lot of trouble afterward, but I am an old man and have not much to hope for in the way of advancement. I'm going to wash my hands of the whole affair. It's up to you. I know nothing about it. If you take this man to your machine and sell him a few gallons of gasoline, it is none of my affair and I can't say anything. You don't have to tell me about it. If he uses my lawn to get off into the air again it's not my business. It's up to the Germans to stop that. At any rate, the best thing you can do is to get him out of the house and out of my sight."

He left the room, and Martin, leaning on Morgan's arm, followed him down the stairs to the main hall of the château. It was a big room, with a stone-flagged floor and a gallery around it.

As they reached it, there was a rattle of drums from without, the measured tramp of heavy feet, and the sudden sharp note of a bugle. Healy dashed into the room.

"They're here!" he said. "If young Frenchy is goin' to get a ghost of a show you've got to get him out now."

"Take him to the carriage house," said Mr. Cameron, "and stay there with him."

"Come on, Frenchy," said Healy; "we're on

our way. The world's against you, but we'll save you."

The pair vanished, and as they went the tramp without grew louder, they heard a curt command in German, and the door swung open to admit an officer of uhlans.

He was a blond, good-looking young fellow with a kindly blue eye and a very poor command of English. His clothes were dusty and travel-stained, and he carried his long, straight saber in its sheath under his left arm. The lamplight shone on the glittering metal of his square-topped helmet, and his spurs jingled heavily on the stone flagging. He brought his hand up to his forehead in a stiff salute.

"I am here," he said, "to search for a French aviator. I am Lieutenant Franz of the Eleventh Uhlans."

"Do you realize that this house is, for the time being, the property of the United States?" snapped Cameron, in whom the situation had aroused a new sharpness and decision.

"We intend no intrusion. The safety of the empire is at stake. I must make a search of the house," said Franz.

"And if I refuse to permit such a search?"

"My orders are to make the search."

"And if I write to my own government, whose relations with yours are friendly, and protest against this as an outrage?"

"My orders are still to make a search."

"You make the search over my protest."

"I am sorry; I am ordered and must obey."

He turned, and called something out in guttural German. A dozen troopers swung through the open doors and came to attention within.

They carried short carbines, and as they grounded them with a rattle on the flagged floor Morgan slipped from the room, quite unnoticed. He gathered from Mr. Cameron's attitude that the old war horse of the diplomatic service was playing bravely for time, and he knew also that there was no time to lose.

He had not been long enough in the château to know its interior arrangements, but he knew enough to go to his own room, from there to descend the stairs and get out on the lawn from the tower door.

Mr. Cameron surveyed the ranks of the uhlands, and scrutinized severely the good-natured face of Lieutenant Franz. He held himself with a certain dignity that won the respect of the young German.

"I am very sorry, indeed." Franz spoke in his own tongue now, realizing somehow that Cameron would understand it and evidently a great deal more at ease than when using the medium of a foreign language. "I have my orders. It is for me to obey them. I am to search for a French

aviator whose machine was seen falling in this locality."

"Were your orders specific—to search the American legation here?"

"Not specifically—they were to search the vicinity. I take it that this house is included. I cannot afford to make mistakes."

"Lieutenant Franz"—Cameron's tone was quite gentle and patronizing—"aside from the personal inconvenience of having your troops quartered on me and my guests for the greater part of the evening, I don't want to see a young man like yourself make a mistake that may hurt your future. You know, of course, that it is the wish of your government to avoid giving offense to Americans, just as it is our wish to observe a real neutrality and to remember that we must maintain and preserve our feelings of friendliness to both Germany and France."

Lieutenant Franz inclined his head respectfully.

"May I ask you, then, whence your orders came?"

"From the officer in command of the military forces at present disposed and utilized in the peaceful occupation of Luxembourg."

His heels came together, and he drew himself erect.

"May I still further trespass upon your kind-

ness by asking the name of the officer in command? It is possible that I know him."

Lieutenant Franz hesitated for a fraction of a second.

"Count Otto von Hollman," he said finally.

"Count von Hollman is, I think, a friend of mine," said Cameron. "We had the pleasure of his company here for luncheon to-day—this unfortunate exigency deprived us of the pleasure of his society at dinner. Where is he now?"

"At the temporary military headquarters of the German forces engaged in the peaceful occupation of Luxembourg—at the Hotel de Ville." Franz repeated this as if by rote.

"I have a telephone here," said Cameron, "perhaps you could spare the time to call up Count Hollman and tell him where you are."

Franz hesitated. He was plainly torn between a natural good-natured prepossession in favor of the dignified old gentleman and the fear of winning a reprimand by an unmilitary tendency to "reason why," as Tennyson puts it.

It is probable that the sudden appearance of Charlotte Cameron decided him. His eye kindled a little as it fell on her—there was something about her blond face and gentle bearing that appealed to his Germanic mind. The social atmosphere generated by the personality and dignity of Mr. Cameron had exerted its effect on him; now that it was strengthened by the presence of

the lovely Miss Cameron he was quite overcome. He bowed gallantly as Mr. Cameron presented him to his niece.

"I will telephone," he said.

Turning, he snapped out an order to his men, who formally "stood at ease," dropping their hands on the muzzles of their short carbines and staring blankly before them. He followed Cameron to his office, where a telephone instrument stood on a corner of the flat-topped desk.

The exchange in Luxembourg was a busy place that night, but it was not long till Charlotte and Mr. Cameron heard the ring of Count Otto's voice at the other end of the wire.

They both stepped back to the entrance hall to allow Franz to do his telephoning in private, but they could hear enough through the open door to indicate that Hollman was asking many questions.

Lieutenant Franz finally laid down the instrument and appeared before them. There was a troubled expression on his honest, good-natured face.

"I am very sorry," he said. "Count Hollman asks me to beg your forgiveness, but to remind you that the urgency is great. He regrets exceedingly that a thorough search must be made of the house and grounds. He further asks——"

What Hollman had requested further was not to be communicated to Cameron or his niece. Franz interrupted himself suddenly, grasped his

saber, and started for the door. From beyond the open window came faintly the rattling sound of the exhaust of a petrol engine, followed by a hoarse shout.

Franz snapped out an order and dashed after his squad of uhlans as they faced about. A medley of noises arose from without. The sound of a second aeroplane in flight, a succession of three shots, more shouts, and the sound of a trumpet.

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## CHAPTER V

### MR. MORGAN DISCOVERS THAT THE KRIEGSPIEL IS A MORE DANGER- OUS GAME THAN TENNIS

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WHEN Morgan slipped out of the postern door and stood again on the dark, cool lawn he had a definite idea that if Etienne Martin were to be saved at all from the German troops it must be immediately. It was obvious to him that Mr. Cameron had been sparring for time, and the dignity and readiness of the old gentleman had won his admiration. Sometimes, in the past, he had thought Charlotte's uncle a little inefficient, a little fussy in small ways, a little too punctilious about points of etiquette. In the present instance, however, Robert Cameron had come out glowingly as a real gentleman of the old school. Morgan felt that he himself could not have held the Prussian officer in parley half a minute.

The rose-scented lawn stretched before him



quiet and peaceful. The night had grown a little brighter and clearer, and in the east, over the dark shadows of the lime trees, was the slenderest, yellow slip of a rising moon.

There were dark shadows, darker than the trees, thought Morgan, along the boulevard, and he imagined he saw the black lances of uhlans there. Toward the west, however, the lawn lay deserted. Morgan hurried past the barn, and found its doors, which opened on the side toward the cliff and screened from the boulevard, slide wide open again.

He made out the figure of Martin slumped in a heap on the floor. Healy was busy pouring gasoline through a scoop into the tank of the aeroplane.

"I don't know how much gas this thing uses," he said, glancing up at Morgan, "but I'm sure there's enough there now to carry it from Luxembourg to Lege, if that's where young Frenchy wants to go."

He laid aside the empty can, and turned toward Martin.

"Here!" he said. "Wake up! Here's some American rye. Drink that. We haven't any absinth."

Martin drank from the proffered flask, coughed and spluttered, and arose. He swayed for a moment, but the slight rest seemed to have helped

him, and his lithe body seemed to have in it some remarkable recuperative power.

"Couldn't we tumble the machine out over the cliff and hide you here?" suggested Morgan. "The odds are terribly against you, and I don't think that you are in physical condition to get to Liège or anywhere else in an aeroplane."

Healy was inclined to second his master's suggestion, but Martin, who was rapidly recovering command of his mind and body, shook his head.

"It is imperative that I should reach Liège to-night," he said. "Let me tell you in a word, my friends, some of the secrets of the nations and of the kings. To-night Liège is invested by German troops even as Luxembourg is. It is not known to the world—but France has been preparing for this war, which was bound to come. There are French officers at Liège, although the world, the diplomats, do not know it. I—*moi!*—Etienne Martin have gone between them. It was safe for me. It excited less suspicion. I am not in the regular army of France—I am but an employee of the Telegraphique National who has turned aviator. That's why, if the Germans should take me here, I would hang by the rope and not be sent to Berlin as the prisoner of war."

He paused to take another pull at Healy's flask, and to don an aviator's helmet and goggles which he carried fastened to his belt. Healy by this time had lighted a stable lantern and was

examining the strange mechanism of the monoplane, with its frail outstretching wings and its circular Gnome engine.

"There is time for but a word more," said Martin, handing back the flask and speaking quickly. "If I am at Liège to-night, Paris—France is saved from the blow which is aimed at her heart and which is at this moment ready to fall. To-morrow General von Emmich will call upon Liège to surrender to allow the passage of German troops. Those at Liège think that the Germans are there in force, that their siege guns are there, that they can batter down their forts and burn the city with shells from across the river.

"I, Etienne Martin, know better! The main German force is *here*; Germany aims at the heart of France through Luxembourg, but first she hopes to take Liège by assault. If I arrive not at Liège the town will be abandoned to the Germans. If I arrive there to tell them of the disposition of the German forces Liège will not surrender and the Germans cannot march through Luxembourg till Liège or Belgium has been won."

He made a sudden dash at Healy, and, to the great astonishment of that individual, hugged him to his breast and kissed him enthusiastically on both cheeks.

"I embrace thee!" he cried. "My friend, and the friend of *la patrie*."

"Cut it out!" yelled Healy, shoving him away.

Etienne, nothing disconcerted, staggered gayly toward his machine. A moment later the engine was going and he was in the aviator's seat.

The machine went slithering unsteadily down the slope from the barn, a dark, weird shape in the half light. Then the engine sputtered and stopped while Etienne worked frantically with spark and lever.

Healy and Morgan dashed after it. As he ran a sound caused Morgan to turn and look back. A dark, tall shadow approached across the lawn. Morgan's heart was in his throat. He could see the lance, the trooper's helmet. He could hear now the guttural noise from his throat as the uhlan, who had evidently leaped his horse over the hemlock hedge, spoke to his animal.

The engine spluttered again, and there was an explosion from a back fire. The shadowy form of the trooper straightened up, Morgan saw him rein in his horse.

The engine burst forth again in a succession of explosions, and the uhlan suddenly came forward at a gallop. The long lance was poised, and though the machine was now running easily down the grassy slope, the horseman was moving faster still and was almost upon it. Morgan saw the heavy trooper raise himself in the saddle, and knew that but the winking of an eyelid saved Martin from the furious thrust of that iron lance through his back.

He scarcely knew what he did, but in some mad impulse flung himself forward, seized the bridle reins of the uhlan's horse, and dragged down on them with all his force. Morgan was a strong, big-boned, powerful man, and his strength was exerted to the utmost. He was more use in an emergency of this kind than in a trial of skill with Count Otto. He was sent staggering, but he kept his feet, and the tall, raw-boned horse half turned about, staggered in turn, almost fell, and reared up suddenly.

The trooper had already raised himself in his stirrups and thrown himself forward in preparation to striking the *aéroplane* with his lance. His horsemanship and training were faultless, but now he had lost his seat and he was stiff, heavy, and clumsy. The lance struck the ground and bent beneath him, and the rider plunged headforemost over his horse's head.

Morgan, as he released the reins and dodged away from the flashing, stabbing hoofs of the frantic horse, saw him hit the turf, half roll over in a sort of somersault, and fall in a huddled heap. The chin strap to his helmet had broken, and the helmet rolled away from him across the grass.

In the meantime the *aéroplane* had gathered way. Morgan turned to look at it as the freed horse dashed off behind him and cleared the hemlock hedge once more in a frantic leap. The plane

was running down the grassy slope nearer and nearer to the edge of the cliff. It was going slowly, without enough apparent driving power to lift it. It seemed as if Martin with all his hopes and fears for France had escaped the uhlan's lance only to be dashed to pieces at the foot of the cliff.

At the very last moment, however, the guiding planes swung upward, the machine drove clear from the ground and into the air. It hung, it swayed, it dove downward suddenly, and then righted itself as suddenly. The engine began to sputter more evenly, the machine circled, swayed again, drove upward.

But Martin's danger was not yet passed. From the eastward appeared another plane, bigger, wider, evidently more powerful than Martin's, with drooping, trailing wings. As it swung past above them it was evident that there were two men in it. One of them was aiming a rifle at Martin's machine. Twice it flashed, and twice the sharp report floated—down to them. Once or twice they could see a flash from the Frenchman's machine, and knew that he was returning the fire with his revolver. He shot about in a wider circle and presently appeared again, flying due north-west and slightly higher than the German machine, which Morgan identified as a Rumpler "Dove," and which followed it like a bird of prey.

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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It was a thrilling little drama they had witnessed, and the excitement of it, the desperate energy and determination evident on both sides made them forget some of the things nearer to themselves. For the moment they forgot the senseless trooper who lay beside them in a grotesque attitude on the grass; they forgot the riderless horse that had leaped the hedge, and they forgot the German soldiers who must be ranked on the road only a thousand yards away.

Healy, being a polyglot individual, was able to misuse more languages than most educated people.

"En avang, Etienne, mong brave gar!" he said. "Our gas didn't suit his carburetter, but it's sparking all right now and he's going to give that Goiman machine a chase."

At the same moment the squad of uhlans on foot dashed around the corner of the house, and both Morgan and Healy were seized and held. Lieutenant Franz followed later, and, pursuing him, running across the lawn, came an infantry officer wearing the squat, spiked helmet and dark service clothes of a line regiment.

"Lieutenant Franz!" he said; "you allowed, by your delay, a foreign aviator to escape from this place."

"My orders were to be courteous and to ask permission to search first," said Franz sullenly.

"Enough!" said the officer. "Bring these men to the house."

Healy and Morgan were marched along, each with a soldier on either side. When they reached the porch the new infantry officer faced them. He was a heavy man, with a pale, flabby face and cold gray eyes. He studied them as they stood under the porch lights, each with a trooper on either side.

"Who was the man who escaped in the aëroplane?" he said at length.

Before Morgan could answer him Healy's native impertinence asserted itself.

"His name," said Healy, "is Rougemont la Rochefoucauld; but we call him 'Young Frenchy' for short."

The Prussian officer's answer to this was to reach forward and strike Healy across the face heavily with his open hand. Morgan, who at times had little enough patience with Healy's good-natured effrontery, felt his blood boil. He started forward, but was checked, not by the restraining hand of the soldier on either side of him, but by the appearance of another officer of high rank who had descended from a motor car on the driveway and now stepped silently upon the porch.

He was dressed in the dark uniform and black busby of a colonel of hussars and carried a sword.



There was something authoritative, quiet, and menacing in his bearing.

Morgan was not surprised when the officer turned to face him under the porch light to find himself gazing into the inscrutable eyes of Count Otto von Hollman.

"So, my friend," he said softly, "it is you! You would have done better to have remained with your golf and tennis than to have taken up the *Kriegspiel*. It is a game for grown men."

"Why am I being held here?" said Morgan.

"You are under arrest—you and your chauffeur."

"Is that why this brute," he indicated the infantry officer, "strikes my chauffeur in the face while there are two men holding him?"

"Von Graf!" Hollman turned to the infantry officer. "Have I not told you before that brutality and ill temper will ruin you? Back to your men!"

Von Graf saluted and withdrew. Hollman, scarcely acknowledging the salute, turned to bow profoundly to Mr. Cameron and Charlotte, who appeared on the porch.

"I came," he said, "as soon as I could after the telephone message of Lieutenant Franz, Mr. Cameron. I am sorry that this has occurred. It would have been better if you had allowed the search at once. It might have saved me the painful neces-

sity of placing your guest and this other man under arrest."

"Under arrest!" said Cameron. "I feel that I have a right to protest. It is only a temporary embarrassment, perhaps, but it is needless."

"It is more than a temporary embarrassment, I fear," said Hollman, "and it is most needful. There are grave charges against Mr. Morgan."

"What?" said Cameron. "Suppose a Frenchman did escape from this lawn. Was it Mr. Morgan's place as a neutral to detain him? Germany and France are not yet at war."

"Germany and France have been at war for an hour, but that is not the gravest charge against your guest. A moment ago Private Strassman of the eleventh regiment of uhlans was found insensible on your lawn. His horse has vanished. His lance lay beside him, bent and useless. He is seriously hurt. He was a brave man, who was trying to stop a French spy. Your guest met him in the performance of his duty. He threw him from his horse. If Private Strassman dies your guest, a noncombatant, has brought about the death of a German soldier while engaged in obeying the commands of the emperor and the performance of his duty. That charge is sufficiently grave, I think."

As in a horrible dream Morgan saw Mr. Cameron's face grow pale, and saw Charlotte's eyes widen in horror. He knew enough of the laws

of war and of the inexorable rule of the German troops to know that the fate that he had feared for Etienne Martin now hung darkly over himself and Healy. He looked about him in a sort of daze. He was hemmed in by men. He could see the bayonets of the infantry, and behind them the black, pennoned lances of the cavalry.

The whole afternoon was a horrible nightmare. Five hours ago he had been a peaceful American with no thought more disturbing than the losing of a tennis tournament or the miscarriage of a bag of golf clubs.

And now! Now the rope was almost at his throat and at Healy's. And besides, what trouble his rash action had brought upon Cameron! What anxiety and what cares upon Charlotte and others he could only dimly foreshadow.

It was with a chilled and heavy heart that he turned from his host and moved toward the car with leaden steps, a soldier urging him forward on either side. His own rashness, his own folly had led him into this.

And yet it was hard to imagine Martin strung up, a dark figure at the end of a rope. And now that same fate threatened him! He was stunned and speechless as the car set off down the Boulevard Adalbert toward the Hotel de Ville.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE POWER OF THE MACHINE

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**S**PEEDING along the Boulevard Adalbert, Morgan and his chauffeur, as prisoners, got their first glimpse of history in the making—the occupation of neutral territory by the advance guard of an army of invasion, bent upon striking at a foe beyond.

Reposing in the fancied security of a treaty guaranteed by major powers of Europe, inviolate for many years, the residents of the duchy had never dreamed of such an astounding proceeding—not to say such an unprecedented one. The swift entrance of the uhlans had given no opportunity for an alarm; and even had one been possible, what could this Pomeranian spaniel principality of less than one thousand square miles have done to check the advance of the gigantic mastiff of Germany, bent on camping in its diminutive kennel for the night?

Or what resistance would have availed on the

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part of a quarter of a million peaceful, devout inhabitants, against sixty-five millions of expertly trained Germans, every man of whom between eighteen and forty-five had only to take down his uniform and weapons if commanded so to do?

Although the night was now well advanced, nevertheless the atmosphere of disturbance on the one hand and military precision on the other were everywhere perceptible. As the auto containing Colonel Otto von Hollman and his prisoners whirled past the Central Station and tram terminus, after turning into the Avenue de la Garde, the troops were already in command of the place, and, farther along, little knots of station employees and mechanics were descried being convoyed toward the Plateau du Rham. Morgan shuddered. The prison was on the plateau.

To his surprise, however, their own machine kept straight on across the main viaduct spanning the Petrusse, instead of turning toward the prison. It thundered across the river, the sentries saluting the machine with a respect that was obvious. The deference—not to say reverence—on several faces struck Morgan as rather singular under such circumstances, and he watched Von Hollman narrowly. The count's face, however, was inscrutable.

As they entered the main part of the city of Luxembourg, turning around the Cathedral Notre Dame, passing the ducal palace, and the Place

d'Armes where only a few hours before the inhabitants had gathered to enjoy a concert by the municipal band, other signs of the invasion were plainly discernible. Gray-clad sentries in spiked helmets were at almost every corner. Rapid-fire guns, still canvas-covered, were in position to command the streets of the city from all directions, fronting the Avenue de la Arsenal and the Eich Road.

They halted under the frowning walls of the Palace of Justice, and hard by the entrance to the Hotel de Ville, whose concourse was bristling with staff officers. Evidently this was to be the brigade headquarters for the night. Morgan and Healy descended at a curt command.

The military efficiency, the steadiness, and purpose of the German occupation drove the iron of despair deeper into the souls of both men as they ascended the steps. They felt themselves caught in the maw of a vast and complicated machine. Protest or resistance seemed useless.

It was war, war as a business, as the Germans wage it, and not the feverish fantasy of a troubled dream.

The two were left in a small room. A sentry, with fixed bayonet, guarded the window, another stood at the door. Presently a lieutenant came with two more men. They were searched, and the process was courteous but thorough and efficient. Morgan, whose knowledge of German was lim-

ited, nevertheless comprehended the mutter of the officer as he left—something to the effect that he was an English spy, sending information to that country by way of America.

"Say!" demanded Healy, as the door again closed upon them. "What does that bird think he's saying—hey?"

Morgan shook his head soberly. "I'm afraid that we made a mistake in trying to help that aviator."

"This is like the third degree," said Healy. "But the count has got nothing on *us*. He didn't see us hand out the gasoline. He has no evidence."

"He seems to think he has," replied Morgan. A deep, melodious chorus of "*Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*," floated through the open window. Another detachment of infantry was marching past—then another and yet another, the last lustily singing "*Die Wacht am Rhein*."

"A bunch of singing societies," commented Healy, with a levity that was not at all in keeping with Morgan's mood. "Cheer up, doc! On the dead level, we have a chanst to beat this charge, whatever it is! I'll get woid out to me district leader, and then——"

Morgan looked at him seriously. The somberness of his expression caused Healy's mouth to droop and the smile to leave his eyes. But Morgan was not thinking so much of himself as of

Healy. Had he warned Healy of the risk which they were both running, when giving aid and comfort to an acknowledged French spy, Healy might have most wisely decided to allow Etienne Martin to shift for himself—at least he would have had a freedom of choice in the matter, instead of allowing his habitual blind devotion to his employer to place him in this decidedly unpleasant position. Morgan resolved, whatever else occurred, to shoulder the blame. Healy could not be punished, in that event. The chauffeur's education had never included lectures on the rights of belligerents, or abstruse discourses on articles of war; the difference between noncombatants and spies, nor any of the other thousand-and-one technical rules by which civilized nations have agreed that their wholesale murders shall be conducted.

The physician's reverie went back to the beginning—to the very hour when he had rolled up in his auto, and received Mr. Cameron's handclasp of welcome, to Count Otto von Hollman's subtle arrogance toward him; to the toast which the German had drunk with the ominous words: "To the day!"

That toast held an unpleasant significance. It was the terse expression of the deep-seated racial ambition and hope—a pledge to the hour when Germany should spring into the sunlight, the ruler of the world. Surely the count, for all his sneers at the impractical, was a dreamer and vis-



ionary himself. And surely, too, his dream was a glorious one.

For years it had been drunk—not by the rank and file of German population—but by the hereditary descendants of the house of Hohenzollern and the military caste which had kept all Europe in a state of apprehension since the Franco-German war.

*"To the day!"*

Why had Count Otto von Hollman—a well-bred man—selected such a florid toast at an innocuous lawn party, in neutral territory, and within the privileged residence of the minister of a foreign power?

He was thinking of the peculiar expression of the count's eyes as Von Hollman gazed steadily at him over the brimming goblet of his fourth drink of the "May wine," when Healy's voice broke in upon his attempted analysis of conditions—as if in answer to his unspoken question.

"Say, doc!"

"What is it, Healy?"

"The count is a nut!"

"What makes you think that?"

"On the dead level, doc, I knew it the minute I seen him. If our machine hadn't been a self-starter, I'd have hit him with the crank handle. He isn't a dope fiend and he isn't crazy, yet—but he's on his way there. Did you ever see eyes like his before?"

In spite of his desperate plight, Morgan laughed. Then he leaned forward.

"Not too loud, Healy. We are prisoners, remember."

Healy lowered his voice to a husky whisper as he continued:

"I don't say he's crazy just because he locked us up here." Healy pushed one of the little iron chairs with which the room was furnished in Morgan's direction and took another for himself. "It was his duty to do that. Nobody could help seein' that Private Strassman had been hurt and that young Frenchy must have had some help in getting away. But that May wine went to his head a little too quick. He's dreamed a lot about that 'Day' he talks about, and he's a nut as sure as you live. A man gets a big idea like that in his head and then by and by the idea gets him. The count ought to cut out the May wine and the 'Hochs' and them fancy uniforms and go and live on a farm on a milk diet."

Another might have treated Healy's ideas as an alienist with scant consideration, but Morgan regarded him gravely. A fixed and dominating idea has always been a dangerous thing, and certainly Hollman was fixed and dominated by the idea of Germany's future as the greatest of the world powers. And the circumstances that surrounded them now were not such as to calm the mind of a man with the faintest instinct for mili-

tary glory and display. Even the steady pulse of Morgan beat a trifle faster at the steady, maddening roll of drums that they heard outside, and the shattering blare of bugles. And if Hollman were a little affected it was not a consoling thing to remember that in the near future he was likely to be the most valuable friend and companion that Charlotte could find. There was enough to worry about, however, in their own immediate case without borrowing trouble in regard to the future.

Morgan was tired, and, stretching himself, glanced around the room to see what provisions had been made for their comfort. A small iron cot was set on each side of the room. There were several iron tables decorated with steins and big china pipes. Also the room contained the most complete and variegated assortment of spittoons that it had ever been Morgan's good fortune to behold. Outside of an iron washstand and several small iron chairs this was all.

Morgan was still smiling a little at this Prussian military idea of a furnished bedroom, when the hands of the two sentinels sprang to salute, and Von Hollman entered the room. In the uniform of the Death Hussars, he was an even more notable sight than in civilian clothes. His eye passed over Healy as though he did not see him. He nodded to Morgan, but his face was grave.

"I am sorry," he said, "that this has happened. I am unusually busy to-night, but I have ordered

that this room where you are to be held for the present be made as comfortable as possible."

"Oh, that's all right," said Morgan, "I don't mind this. But how long must I stay here?"

"You are to be tried," said Hollman, "by court-martial for an assault on Trooper Strassman, and for assistance given to a French aviator. I would, if I could, secure your liberty to-night. Mr. Cameron and Miss Cameron have both urged it upon me, but it is a matter entirely out of my power."

"I assaulted no one," said Morgan.

"Strassman, if he is able to talk, will appear against you in the morning. It will be for the court to decide, then."

"And I am liable to an imprisonment?"

"Imprisonment?" Hollman's eyebrows went up at a sharp angle. "Perhaps so; but military law is sometimes stricter than that."

Morgan was a man who had always imagined himself quite above the imputation of physical cowardice. He had lived a life adventurous far beyond the ordinary, and, although he had known times when he had been anxious and even worried, it was at this moment that for the first time in his life he tasted the sickening and terrible sensation of absolute fear. He stood upright, but felt as if he were sinking.

The dark figure of the count seemed that of an executioner.

The light from the gas jets gleamed on the

bayonets of the two sentries. The early morning sun might send such a glitter from the bayonets of a firing squad. The room with its paneled walls and hanging candelabra swayed before him, then steadied again. Morgan heard his own voice speaking. It sounded as if it were a long way off.

"You need not say any more," the far-off voice—his own—was saying. "I understand. But I want to go on record now as saying that Mr. Cameron had no knowledge of the affair whatever, and that my chauffeur, Healy, had nothing to do with any accident to any German soldier."

Hollman was watching him narrowly.

"You are a brave man, Mr. Morgan," he said. "I am sorry we have not known each other longer. I will withdraw these sentries and have your chauffeur removed to another room. I hope that you will have a comfortable night. Perhaps you will shake hands with me."

Any feeling of resentment or jealousy that might have been in Morgan's breast was now overcome in the stunned bewilderment of his present situation. He felt his hand crushed in Hollman's. He saw Healy disappear with a soldier on either side of him. The door slammed shut, and he heard bolts shot on the other side. He was left alone in a garishly lit, silk-paneled room furnished with iron tables and chairs and iron beds.

In Luxembourg of yesterday, the Luxembourg which now seemed an old-world place, this might

have been a concert room or a ballroom. But now the gilt chairs were gone and iron chairs filled their place. There were soldiers' cots where lounges had been.

French grace and luxury and Prussian iron! How long could such a contest last? What chance had France against this new race of conquerors! As if in answer to his thoughts, a new sound of fifes and snare drums arose from the street. Going to one of the tall windows, he looked down at the moonlit square. At intervals of fifteen feet or so were the gleaming bayonets and spiked helmets of sentries. Across the middle of the square passed another fresh regiment of infantry, the men marching steadily and with incredible speed beneath their heavy accouterments. The shrill fifes and rattling drums sounded farther and farther away in the distance, but still remained the steady tramp of feet.

Germany armed and all powerful was sweeping through Luxembourg, south and west. A great machine of flesh and blood and steel and iron. Armored motor trucks, guns dragged by traction engines capable of doing the work of sixty horses, lumbering vans, even traveling kitchens, swept past under the moon. This was the machine in which he had been caught. He had tried to snatch one life out of its path, and he himself might pay the penalty. The gentle outward bearing of Hollman gave him no comfort. He knew that if ever

a man had become the living impersonation of the Prussian system it was Hollman. Something of the fanatic, something of the lust of arbitrary power was in the German's face. Morgan felt no doubt that the count, who undoubtedly was in love, would pursue Charlotte as relentlessly as he worked for Germany. Such a man, he thought, was not safe to trust with an American girl.

He turned back into the room, put out the gas, which flared and spluttered in the night wind, threw off his coat and shoes, and flung himself on the bed. He was tired, and he soon slept. No dreams broke his repose. Indeed, when he woke and saw the morning light streaming into the strangely furnished room, it was as if he were coming back to a horrible dream world that he had escaped from for a few hours.

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## CHAPTER VII

### COURT-MARTIAL!

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**A**T eight o'clock that morning a breakfast of bread and coffee was set before Morgan. At ten a lieutenant—none other than young Franz, who had been detained in his search of the Cameron house while Martin had escaped—appeared at the door. His ordinarily good-natured face was downcast and dejected, and he shook his head gravely as Morgan rose to meet him.

"This is a bad business," he said. "I have been reprimanded, and lost a chance for honorable mention, but you—you are to be tried by court-martial before Major von Graf."

"Is von Graf the officer who hit my chauffeur in the face?" Morgan had no very pleasant recollection of the man.

"He is. I tell you, you have little chance. I have a file of men outside to take you to the trial, but I give you a minute now—for I believe that I am speaking to a man who is soon to die. Ach!



I like not this war. To give one's own life is well—but the other things that a man must do!”

Franz dropped his glance on the floor and turned away from Morgan. His own sorrow and horror were evident enough, but there was something of courtesy and consideration in the averted gaze. He wanted Morgan to have a moment to himself unobserved. It was all that Franz could give him.

The brilliant morning sunshine streamed in across the trampled carpet. From somewhere near by came the trilling of a canary. A thousand birds were singing in the wooded slopes of the Ardennes. That same sunlight was sifting through the lime trees in the peaceful château of Cameron. It seemed impossible that this was to be Morgan's last sight of the sun, that this was his last morning in the world.

“What about Healy?” he said, at length.

“He will be arraigned with you.”

“Are his chances any better than mine?”

“No.”

“It's a damned outrage!” said Morgan. “War had not been declared. That boy knows nothing about the laws of neutrality. Suppose he did give a little gas to a Frenchman. He was only helping out a man in a hole and obeying one of the ordinary instincts of humanity. You can bet something that Mr. Cameron has wired the Sec-

retary of State about this, and that it will cost Germany something."

Franz advanced toward him and laid a hand on his shoulder. "You are a brave man," he said. "You are honest. You have but a few hours to live, and I can speak freely to you. If any other man than Count Otto von Hollman—any other man of the same rank in the army of the Fatherland—were in command of the forces here, I would say that the worst that could have happened for you and the servant would have been imprisonment in Spandau for the period of the war. But Hollman!" He threw out his hands in a gesture of hopelessness.

"Hollman is a friend of Mr. Cameron's."

"Friend! What is friendship to him when his wishes are opposed! Hollman is a gentleman of the highest blood, he is an officer of the greatest attainments and skill, but when his wishes are opposed—he is a madman. There are things I could tell you about him."

"Why should he concern himself so much in this affair?"

"In England, perhaps in America, it is not considered the part of a gentleman to discuss ladies, but you are about to die, and the time is one for honesty. Von Hollman is in love with the princess, the niece of Mr. Cameron. Every one in Luxembourg knows it, and every one who knows Von Hollman knows that if she does not love him

she would be better out of the country and back in the United States. You are his rival, and now it is his duty to the Fatherland to remove you from his path."

"He isn't running the court-martial."

"Von Graf is, though, and Von Graf, although he is my immediate superior, is a brute. There are men such as he in every army, and it is men like Von Graf who give an army a bad name."

"I don't see how Von Hollman can dare put me out of the way. He is responsible to the government in Berlin. They want the friendship of the United States."

"Von Hollman will dare anything—and there are secrets about the government. Von Hollman is a bigger man than his rank or name would indicate. I don't know what—but there is a mystery about him."

"I am confident," said Morgan, "that if we could hold off this court-martial till this afternoon, it would never come off."

Franz shook his head. "You are wrong," he said.

"Hasn't Mr. Cameron cabled to Washington and wired to Berlin?"

Franz nodded.

"Those cables will be answered."

Again Franz shook his head. "There will be no answer to the cables or the telegrams. Mr. Cameron wrote them, and gave them to the tele-

graph official. That is all. How do you know that they have ever been sent?"

He laid his hand on Morgan's arm just as the little ormolu clock on the mantel struck the quarter hour.

"Come," he said, "I have given you more time than I had intended."

Outside the door was a squad of four infantrymen in grayish-green caps and service uniforms, and with fixed bayonets. With the consciousness that two of these bayonets were very close to his back, Morgan was marched down a flagged corridor, down a flight of stairs, and into a great assembly room. There were chairs for many people in the room, but it was deserted save for sentries at the doors and a sinister-looking group of officers in brilliant uniforms seated about a table on a raised platform.

Healy was there, very pale and quiet, between two soldiers, and Morgan could see, seated in the background, a big giant of a man in the uniform of the uhlans with a bandage about his head. He had expected to see Mr. Cameron there, but there were none but German soldiers. Morgan moved to the place he was directed, and looked down upon the heavy face and pale, dull eyes of Von Graf in a sort of daze. This speed and expedition, the absence of Mr. Cameron meant only one thing—that what Lieutenant Franz had said was true, and that he and Healy were being railroaded

to their death to please a madman who happened to be in love with Charlotte.

He and Healy were left standing while the proceedings went forward. They moved with a businesslike briskness that left both the Americans too bewildered to protest. One officer was busy taking down a stenographic record of the examination while the others made occasional notes. Von Graf left his position as presiding officer to testify himself. He spoke in German. He pointed out Healy and Morgan, and it was evident that he was identifying them. There was no doubt about the official correctness of the proceedings, in spite of the dispatch with which they were conducted.

Morgan and Healy were represented by counsel, a slim young officer of hussars, with light hair and a sharp nose, while a staff officer with a red beard was the prosecuting official. When Von Graf had finished his testimony he was submitted to a little cross-examination, and after contemptuously answering a few questions took his seat with the five other officers who composed the court.

Franz followed him, standing very straight and giving his testimony with soldierlike directness and simplicity. Two privates of the Eleventh Uhlans, dressed in their uniforms with yellow facings, followed him. They testified in regard

to the pursuit of the aviator. Then Private Strassman was called.

He was an immense, rawboned man, with sleepy, good-natured eyes. After answering the usual questions as to his name and rank, he was called upon to face the prisoners. He turned his bandaged head in their direction, and Healy and Morgan looked into his eyes. This was the man whose word was to send them to their doom. With a sinking heart, Morgan looked at him, and then—something happened that seemed so bizarre, so unreal as to make Morgan feel again that he was living through some grotesque and horrible dream.

Private Strassman, the man who had been riding after the aviator with lance upraised, who had been left lying senseless on the turf after Morgan's intervention, winked at Morgan!

The rest of Strassman's face remained impassive and stolid, but the left eyelid dropped and raised itself again. It was not an accident. There was no mistaking it. It was a genuine American wink, quite friendly, and with a sort of alertness about it quite out of keeping with Strassman's general appearance. His head was turned directly toward Morgan when it happened and away from the commanding officers, so that Morgan and Healy alone could see it.

Von Graf addressed him in German.

"Can you identify the prisoners as the men who interfered with you last night?" he said.

"*Nein*," said Strassman calmly, "*Ich kann nicht!*"

Strassman made the announcement as one stating the most trite and commonplace fact, but if he had thrown a hand grenade at the group of officers at the table he could not have created more of a disturbance. Von Graf rose to his feet with an explosive exclamation. They all leaned forward, red-bearded counsel, slim, sharp-nosed counsel, and judges all seemed to spring toward Strassman, who stood stiff and straight, as stolid as if his face and head were really wooden, as Von Graf was shouting forth in German. The presiding officer waved the counsel away and examined and cross-examined Strassman both in German and English. Strassman was absolutely unshaken. He had never seen either Healy or Morgan before. Yes, he understood the nature of an oath, and was telling the truth. Yes, he remembered the men who had attacked him. They were not at all like the prisoners. What were they like? They were men with whiskers, who looked like Russians.

As the examination proceeded, it became evident that Von Graf alone of those present was disappointed and enraged. The other members of the court-martial were doing their duty, but it was evidently a decidedly unpleasant duty, and

they were distinctly relieved. They showed it in several ways. One leaned back and began to hum the "Pilgrim's Chorus," from Tannhäuser, in a booming voice. The red-bearded prosecutor produced a cigar from some place in his uniform and lit it. Strassman stuck stoutly to his story, and at the end of half an hour Von Graf sank back in his chair, tired and angry.

"Were he in my regiment," he said, "I would know what to do with him!"

Healy was called next, but it was evident by this time that Von Graf was to be disappointed. Although he was the presiding officer, it was the five judges who voted as to the guilt or innocence of the prisoners, and it was clear that they were all relieved to find that they were guilty of nothing very serious. Healy had evidently been called next as the less intelligent of the two, but he made a good impression.

He admitted having sold petrol to a French aviator, but he denied that he had intentionally done anything wrong.

"If I had known there was a war coming on I'd have kept out of it," he said earnestly. "I've got nothing against Goimany. My mother was Goiman and my father Irish, and I always liked nudel soup better than Irish stew. We're not spies, and we didn't hurt nobody. We're Americans, and Mr. Morgan's the whitest man you ever



saw—his business is to mend broken heads, not to break them—he's a doctor."

"We may need him," said the red-bearded prosecutor, who had a better command of English than the others. He turned and addressed the group of officers who constituted the court.

"It is evident that the wrong men have been detained," he said. "Mr. Morgan is an American doctor of good character, and the other man is his chauffeur. It is plain that they are not the men who attacked Private Strassman. As prosecuting officer, I recommend that the prisoners be dismissed on their parole without further examination."

Von Graf rose to his feet, his voice shaking with anger as he spoke.

"Major Schmidt," he said, "you are a traitor!"

"Major von Graf," said Schmidt, stroking his red beard, "there will be an opportunity for you to apologize for that when my friend calls on you. In the meantime, what says the court?"

"Count von Hollman ordered this investigation," said Von Graf. "He thinks this man guilty. Is your authority greater than his?"

"I am neither a tool of Von Hollman's nor afraid of him," said Schmidt. "I do what I think my duty."

He turned to the five judges. "A vote!" he said.

"*Nicht schuldig!*" boomed out the man who had been singing Tannhäuser. "*Nicht Schuldig!*" came from each in turn.

"You shall pay for this, Schmidt," said Von Graf, in a low tone.

"When you please," said Schmidt. He bore one scar on his forehead, and he was evidently looking forward to a duel with Von Graf as carelessly as if it were a breakfast party.

Still in a sort of daze, Healy and Morgan found themselves taking an oath not to fight against Germany, nor to aid, succor, nor assist in any way the foes of the Fatherland.

Still half stunned and bewildered, Morgan found himself a free man, out in the sunlight once more, with Healy beside him and Major Schmidt's arm passed through his in friendly fashion.

He felt weak, and staggered. The peril through which he had passed, the unexpected nature of his rescue, the whole bewildering succession of events, actually seemed to weaken him physically, and it was all he could do for a moment to keep his feet and answer the friendly question of Schmidt, who had lived in New York at one time and wanted to hear from the old town once more.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### CHARLOTTE PULLS THE STRINGS

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**A**N hour later, Morgan and Healy, back once more at the Cameron house, learned the meaning of Strassman's wink and his failure to identify them. Charlotte was responsible for his strange behavior. When he was brought to the house, unconscious from his fall, the gallant Lieutenant Franz had been charmed to allow the prinzeßin, whom Von Hollman admired so much, to dress the wound of his uhlan. Over his gallant protestations, Strassman had been carried to Charlotte's room. Charlotte had, as her uncle sometimes remarked, quite a way with her, and Von Hollman was not the only man in Luxembourg who admired her.

When Private Strassman, of the Eleventh Uhlans, came to after his tumble, he thought for a moment that he had died and was already in heaven. He was in a dainty white room, on Charlotte's own bed, and the sight of a large

Bible on a table at his elbow lent strength to his religious illusion, for Strassman, in his simple way, associated Bibles with heaven, and thought that they were the only books allowed there. In still further proof of the belief that he was in heaven, there was an undeniable lady angel bending over him watching him solicitously, with the most beautiful blue eyes. It was quite ten minutes before he realized that he was in the same old world, and that this beautiful room, the like of which he had never imagined, was one of the apartments of the château. At the end of that ten minutes he had formed a decidedly favorable opinion of Charlotte.

His head was far too sound and hard to be fractured by a tumble on the turf, and it was only the shock of his metal helmet being driven against some sensitive nerve that had knocked him out for the time being. His greatest wish, the thing that would have made this paradise, quite "paradise enow" for him, was a long, cool drink of beer, but Charlotte gave him tea instead, and told him it was better for him. She talked to him in German, expressing her sympathy, and then found out that he could talk English and that he had once worked as a waiter in a café in Cincinnati. Charlotte knew something about Cincinnati herself, and by the time that Strassman realized that he was still on earth they were quite good friends. While Mr. Cameron was

making the wires hot sending out dispatches to Washington and Berlin, Charlotte, like Bunty, was pulling the strings.

Of course, she sympathized with Strassman; and Strassman himself, as soon as he began to realize what had happened to him, bore no rancor.

"I saw the young man reach for der bridle," he said, "unt then the horse reared, unt I fell."

"I'm quite sure he didn't mean to hurt you," said Charlotte, "and now they've gone and arrested him."

"So!" said Strassman sympathetically. "It iss too bad indeed. Unt the airman, did he get away?"

"He got up in the air, all right," said Charlotte. "But I'm almost certain they've shot him or caught him or whatever they wanted to do," she added consolingly. "But Mr. Morgan is arrested—and what will happen to him?"

"He will be tried by court-martial," said Strassman cheerfully.

"Oh, dear!" said Charlotte. "And what will happen then?"

"I will appear against him," went on Strassman methodically. "I will be called as a witness, unt I will be confronted with der brisoner, unt asked to identify him."

"Terrible!" said Charlotte, clasping her hands. "And what will happen then?"

"I will be confronted with der brisoner," went

on Strassman, quite enjoying the interest he was arousing in the breast of this charming young woman. "I will then identify him, unt he will be found guilty of inderfering with a German soldier in pursuit of his duty in time of war."

"And then?"

"He will be led out by der firing squad unt shot. It is der law of war."

"Shot!" said Charlotte. "He mustn't be shot; he can't be shot! He's the nicest man I know, and the kindest. Why, Mr. Strassman, I'm *especially* fond of him, and I'm sure he wouldn't have hurt you for the world if he had known you were performing your duty. Perhaps he didn't think you ought to ride your horse across the grass. You must be a wonderful horseman to have ridden over that hedge. It's really too bad that you fell off just when you were doing so nicely."

"It was nothing," said Strassman patronizingly. "A tumble now and then is nothing."

"And you are not going to let Mr. Morgan get shot for a little thing like that! He's one of the best doctors in America, and I am sure he could fix up your head much better than I have."

"It is the rule of war. The law of war."

Strassman was an unemotional man, but when he saw two bright tears actually forming in Charlotte's eyes, his own honest heart was wrung.

"Ach, fräulein!" he said. "I am sorry."

"And you are going to do it! You are going to murder him!"

"Ach, no; it is not murder. It is martial law. But what can I do?"

"Supposing," said Charlotte, wiping away her tears with a small handkerchief and looking very businesslike—"supposing you were to say you didn't know him! Supposing you said you had never seen him in all your life. They would have to let him off, wouldn't they?"

"Yes," said Strassman doubtfully.

"You have a wife and family?" said Charlotte.

"I have a mother, in Hanover."

"Is she wealthy?"

"Wealthy? Ach, no! She is very poor."

"I know that Mr. Morgan, if he were free, would be very anxious to do something for you—just to recompense you for your injury, you know. He didn't mean to hurt you. It was just his clumsiness. And he'd like very much to give you, say three hundred dollars—that is, if he were free."

"So!" said Strassman cautiously, but with interest. He felt as if he were being drawn into some kind of a trap, but somehow he liked the trap, and it was very hard to deny Charlotte anything when she was bent on having her own way. Like most unselfish people, she was generally

busy trying to get favors for other people, and generally successful at it.

"Surely you are not the kind of a man to wish to see Mr. Morgan shot!" she went on.

"Ach, no! I am not that kind of a man."

"Then you won't do it, will you?"

Strassman found it quite impossible to look into those beautiful and pleading eyes. He felt that he might readily be made to cry himself over the fate of Morgan. He looked down at the counterpane.

"But what can I do?" he said.

"Do what is right," said Charlotte. "Get up and say that you never saw him in all your life, and stick to it. They can't hurt you for that, can they?"

"No."

"You'll not only be saving his life, but you'll just be telling the plain, honest truth," went on Charlotte, with an innocent and eager sophistry. "It was too dark to see him there. You couldn't possibly have seen who he was—now, could you?"

"Maybe not," said Strassman doubtfully.

"Then you'll tell the truth. You'll say you don't know Doctor Morgan and never saw him. And you'll save his life! And you'll get the three hundred dollars to send to your mother in Hanover! And you'll be a hero! And I—I'll never, never forget your kindness." Charlotte clasped



her hands ecstatically and gazed into Strassman's eyes. Strassman wiggled uneasily, and one large foot appeared from under the counterpane. He withdrew it in great embarrassment.

"Ach, Fräulein!" he begged. "Let me think it over for a moment. It is an important matter—my duty as a soldier."

Charlotte rose. "Yes," she said soothingly. "I mustn't bother you now, with your poor head aching so. I don't know whether you remember it or not—perhaps you were just a little delirious from your terrible fall—but you said something about beer when you regained consciousness. In fact, it almost sounded as if you actually wanted to drink beer."

"Yes," said Strassman honestly, "I was not out of my head."

"Suppose I send you up some beer—two or three bottles?"

"Three," said Strassman.

"Four," said Charlotte enthusiastically, "or five—nice, and ice cold, although it's bad for you. But you are such a strong man!"

"Yes," said Strassman modestly. "I am a strong man."

"Well, if I send it up will you drink it?"

"Yes." Strassman was quite positive about this.

"And think over what I've said?"

"Yes, *gnädige fräulein*."

Charlotte departed, and the beer, after a short interval, arrived.

Strassman had hoped that it would be light beer, and it was. He had hoped that it would be cold, and it was. He had hoped that there would be five bottles, and there were—also a big stein to pour it into. After the servant had departed, he sat on the edge of the bed in his shirt and uhlan's trousers, and drank the first bottle. The day had been a long and hot one. He had ridden far and hard in his heavy accouterment. The dust of the road was still in his throat. The tea he had drunk had not washed it out; it had only sprinkled it, so Strassman thought. He drank the first bottle rather hurriedly, as a preparation to considering the problem before him. The second bottle passed into the beyond a little less rapidly, and by the time he was draining the third he was thinking. At the same time he was beginning to feel deliciously comfortable, too comfortable to think anything unpleasant and disagreeable. It was delightful to have his heavy boots off and these soft slippers on, and it was a nice room. He was whistling gayly at the end of the fourth bottle, and halfway through the fifth he had quite made up his mind. Von Graf might rage, but he was a German soldier, and would do his duty, and the fräulein was a lovely lady, and his mother certainly needed the three hundred dollars. Morgan was saved.

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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Charlotte gasped with horror as she saw the tray brought down so soon with the five empty bottles—but still it was a good omen, and Strassman, as he had explained, was so strong a man that beer didn't do him any harm.

Upstairs, Strassman having discovered his large china pipe on a table ready to his hand, had filled it with "leichter Canaster" and was puffing beatifically.

How much of it was beer, how much tobacco, how much native imagination and literary genius is not to be discovered, but the moment when the first cloud of smoke left Strassman's lips was the moment when the two fat Russians with whiskers took form out of the void and became dangerous enemies of the Fatherland.

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## CHAPTER IX

### THE SPIDER'S WEB

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**S**TRASSMAN got his three hundred dollars. By the time it reached him he was firmly convinced that it was nothing in the nature of a bribe, but simply reparation for the injuries he had endured. Also, under the influence of sundry other bottles of beer and a chat with Charlotte, he firmly believed that it was really those creatures of his fancy, two whiskered and villainous Russians, who had upset him from his steed. To his companions smoking their pipes in the Luxembourg barracks he narrated the thrilling tale of his encounter with the Russians, and with each repetition it grew, and Strassman believed it the more. Why Doctor Morgan, after taking the trouble to stitch up his head most skillfully, should send his mother three hundred dollars as a recompense for injuries inflicted by two Russians was a question that did not at all trouble him. Strassman was a German, but not of the

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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scholarly sort, and logical sequences never kept him awake at night.

The red-bearded Major Schmidt, who had been Morgan's prosecutor in the military trial, in which Strassman had so distinguished himself, was a guest at the château for dinner the following evening. He arrived early, but still earlier in the day Count von Hollman himself had driven up in a motor to inquire as to the comfort of the Camerons, and ostensibly also to offer his congratulations to Fairfax Morgan on his escape.

Remembering all that Lieutenant Franz had told him in that hour when he believed himself about to die, remembering also his own feelings and forebodings in regard to the count, it was still hard for Morgan to believe that Von Hollman was anything other than the polished and civilized gentleman he appeared.

"It is a pleasure indeed to see you free again, Mr. Morgan," he said. "I was sorry that I could not be present at the court-martial. I did all I could for you in the selection of the officers to form the court."

Remembering Von Graf and what Franz had said of him, Morgan was not able to make his gratitude particularly apparent or enthusiastic, but Von Hollman seemed entirely at ease and unruffled.

"The German army is a machine," he went on. "Its military value, indeed its very existence, re-

quires that it move and act like a machine, and it must sometimes grind up ruthlessly the human particles that fall into it. Although I am at the present moment in command of the movement to occupy Luxembourg, I am just as much a part of the machine as Strassman, for instance. It is not for me, as your English poet puts it, to 'reason why.' I am just a private in the ranks. Long ago, when the plans for the occupation of Luxembourg, in case of an emergency, were made by the board of strategy, every possible contingency was foreseen, and the definite instructions for the commanding officer in charge were drafted. It is my duty to obey these orders to the last detail. I have done my share now. The military occupation of Luxembourg is now complete, carried out according to the provisions of the schedule. Now it is for us to wait until some further movement of the greater machine, the German army, is communicated to this part here and sets it in motion again."

"This occupation of Luxembourg is undoubtedly a great military feat," said Mr. Cameron acidly. "May I inquire what the next triumph will be?"

Von Hollman smiled tolerantly, and laid his hand on Cameron's arm. "My friend," he said, "you know as well as I do that if I knew the answer to that I could not tell you. But surely

your ears are good enough to have heard some unusual sound in the air."

"I should say they were!" said Cameron. "I left New York to get rid of the confounded steam riveters—I have a nervous system, although Charlotte and Fairfax don't seem to know what it means. I thought that Luxembourg was a quiet place, if such could be found in this world to-day; but last night and this morning were worse than New York ever thought of being. That confounded vibration never lets up for a minute."

The sound which continually filled the air was not unlike the muffled and distant vibration of a thousand distant hard-rock drills. It was low—more of a steady jarring and shaking of the air than a sound—harsh and distinctly unpleasant.

"Some ingenious German ought to put a muffler on your war machine," said Morgan.

"Yes," said Charlotte. "If you can invent a noiseless army, Mr. Cameron will think more of you than of the man who invented wireless telegraphy."

Whatever effect the irreverent comments of the three Americans may have had on Von Hollman, none was evident but good-humored amusement.

He laughed softly, and lit a cigarette.

"You Americans!" he said. "Children among the nations, and wonderful, gifted children, to whom everything is possible, to whom nothing is serious, and all of life—peace and war and love

—is a great joke. If I were to fall in love with an American girl”—he tilted back his head and looked at Charlotte through lowered lids—“I would be more afraid of her sense of humor than of anything else. To be ridiculous is the most fatal thing to a lover’s chances, and it seems to me that it is the gift of the American girl to make all men feel ridiculous.”

“It’s a good thing, too,” said Charlotte. “If you people—you men—all knew how ridiculous all this military business really was, you’d be ashamed to wear a uniform. You might as well make a serious business of tennis or croquet.”

Von Hollman sat up straight, and his eyes snapped. He was like a man who, sparring lightly, suddenly receives a blow that really hurts but at the same time is resolved to conceal his hurt, to keep control of himself and of his temper.

“Prinzessin,” he said, “my work is over for the present. Perhaps you would find it still more amusing to ride out with me in my motor car and see some of the parts of this ridiculous war machine of ours—and how well they work.”

Charlotte bit her lips, and hesitated. “I don’t care for war machines,” she said.

“Perhaps the prinzeßin is afraid,” suggested Von Hollman. “A little afraid as well as amused.”

Charlotte jumped to her feet. “I’m ready,” she said.



"It is too bad"—Hollman turned to Mr. Cameron as he rose—"it is too bad that I have a seat for but one other beside myself and the driver in the car. But I am most anxious to have one American girl see that we Germans, although a race of soldiers, are not a race of barbarians—that although a stern struggle for actual existence forces us to hold a way-through Luxembourg for our troops to march, we do it peacefully and kindly, and with as little inconvenience to the people here as possible."

The harsh, monotonous vibration of the air grew louder and harsher. The distant, muffled riveting hammers and compressed-air drills were pounding to a faster tempo.

"The guns of the army before Liège," said Von Hollman. "They are clearing the way so that our right flank may be guarded. When that sound ceases, their work will be done, and we will be able to move southward."

Von Hollman and Charlotte passed out into the hall. The count had left hanging there a long gray military cape and his hussar's busby. It was an almost oppressively warm afternoon, and he left them hanging there, putting on a cavalry fatigue cap which his chauffeur handed to him, while Charlotte took nothing but a linen duster and an automobile veil.

It was not without some misgivings that Cameron and Morgan, standing side by side on the

porch, watched them roll off down the driveway and disappear under the lime trees of the boulevard, Charlotte's veil fluttering gayly in the hot breeze. In fact, as they both told themselves, if it had been any other girl in the world but Charlotte they wouldn't have let her go. She had always been accustomed to having her own way—not as a spoiled child who is indulged—but as a practical, womanly sort of little girl with a thought for others and a sense of responsibility. One whose way was generally a wise one.

"I wish we were all out of here," said Morgan, at length.

Mr. Cameron pulled a black cigar from his pocket and lit it.

"I can't leave here," he said.

"But I could take Charlotte back to New York with me. As the count said yesterday, there won't be any tennis tournaments in France this year."

"We are in the midst of a general European war," said Cameron. "Luxembourg will likely be a safe place. All the fighting will be farther south—in France. But when I think of Charlotte—I don't like Von Hollman."

"Nor I," said Morgan. "Let Charlotte go with me. I have passports, so has she."

"But the railroads!" said Cameron. "The German government owns all the roads in Luxembourg, and they'll take all those in Belgium—

and for a long time yet they won't be used for anything but the transportation of the kaiser's troops."

"I've got one of the best motor cars in Europe to-day, and she's in the best of condition. New tires—and extra ones—and provisions and gas for an extended tour," said Morgan. "You know that it's a hobby with me. And whatever in the world you may say about Healy, he's a good mechanic, and one of the safest, fastest drivers I know. And you know that I can drive a bit myself. I know the roads between here and Paris. I was planning to go that way myself."

"I wonder how long Paris will be safe," said Mr. Cameron. "And I wonder why I don't get any answers to my cables to Washington and the wires to Brussels and Berlin. I spent a lot of money on tolls yesterday, but not a word have I heard—not a word."

"There you are!" Morgan pointed. "There's the answer, now."

An elderly man in a tight-blue uniform decorated with numerous brass buttons was riding a bicycle up the drive. He dismounted at the foot of the steps, carefully adjusted the wheel so it would stand upright, and came up to them holding two packages. He was not the telegraph messenger who had brought the dispatch to Count von Hollman the day before. That man had

been a native Luxembourgian, who spoke French. This messenger was a German.

"Herr Cameron?" he said.

"Ja," said Mr. Cameron.

He presented the two packages. "*Das geld!*" he said, as he extended one. "*Der brief telegraphische,*" he said, as he thrust the other package into Mr. Cameron's hands. Mr. Cameron studied the packages. They bore numerous official seals, and were addressed to Herr Robert Cameron in businesslike-looking German script.

The messenger now presented a book and a pencil and indicated that he wished Mr. Cameron's signature. Having secured this, he replaced book and pencil in his cap, clicked his heels together, saluted stiffly, mounted his machine in a painstaking, methodical way, and rode slowly off down the drive. He was a quaint figure, this sedentary middle-aged German, in his tight-fitting uniform. There was stiff seriousness and sense of responsibility in every thrust of his short legs as he pedaled off.

"Another cog in the war machine," said Morgan, but the diplomatic representative to Luxembourg did not answer him. Mr. Cameron's face was rapidly growing red and redder. His eyes were flashing angrily. The black cigar was cocked upward at a ferocious angle.

"Look at this!" he said, in a choking voice, slapping the contents of one package with a sheaf

of American money which he had taken from the other. "Look at this final outrage!"

Mr. Cameron held in his left hand a bunch of telegraph and cable dispatches all in his own handwriting, and some of considerable length. They were addressed to the secretary of state at Washington, the United States embassy at Brussels, and the United States embassy at Berlin. They were all protests, more or less indignant, against the arrest of Morgan and Healy.

In the other hand, together with a sizable wad of crisp American money, was a message in English to the effect that owing to military necessities the German governor of Luxembourg had taken charge of the telegraph and cable offices, and that press of business had made it impossible to transmit the messages of Mr. Cameron. The money he had paid for tolls was respectfully returned to him.

"This means," said Cameron, in a voice shaking with indignation, "that if Charlotte hadn't thought to get on the right side of that trooper, you would have been shot, Fairfax. This isn't the work of the German government. They have too much sense. It is Von Hollman's orders. And he is crazy. If I don't get reparation for this, my name isn't Cameron and there isn't any department of state in Washington! I don't want their rotten money"—he shook the sheaf of bills under Morgan's nose—"but I'm going to get my

messages through or kill somebody! Military necessity! A cog in a machine! An infernal smooth-spoken cutthroat lunatic! That's what Von Hollman is!"

It was at this moment that the red-bearded Major Schmidt, who had been invited to dinner, strolled up the driveway, his arm in a sling.

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## CHAPTER X

### TO BREAK THE WEB

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**A**NGRY or not, disturbed or not, Mr. Cameron was at all times a gentleman, and when he gazed into the smiling brown eyes of Major Schmidt, who was a gentleman himself, a good deal of the disturbance left him. From the church of St. Nicolas of Luxembourg, clear and sweet above the jarring, faint discord of far-off German cannon, came the chimes, which play every two hours in the ancient city the refrain of its national anthem, the words of which are: "We want to remain just as we are."

There was something soothing about the mellow cadence. There was something genial and mellow about the red-bearded Schmidt who spoke as good American English as is to be heard in St. Louis or Cincinnati.

"You are hurt," said Morgan, indicating his bandaged wrist, "and I am afraid I got you into that fight."

"I had an old account to settle with Von

Graf." Schmidt shook hands with his left hand. "This scratch will be better in a day—and Von Graf has a bandage round his head. He will not call me traitor again. But my old friend, Herr Cameron, whom I have not seen since I was a young lieutenant, and was appointed to take care of him at the military maneuvers—he seems disturbed."

"I am disturbed," said Cameron. "Look here, Major Schmidt! We are old friends, and you have some sense. I've known you since you were working in the experimental department of the Westinghouse concern in America. What do you think of this?"

Major Schmidt whistled softly as he looked at the telegrams in Mr. Cameron's handwriting and the official stamps across them. He shot a keen glance at young Morgan and stroked his red beard reflectively.

"This is terrible," he said, at length. "When Count Otto von Hollman holds the reins, he drives hard. And Von Graf—the brute!—is Von Hollman's man—and Von Hollman is attracted by your niece, Mr. Cameron?"

"I suppose so," said Mr. Cameron rather sulkily. He didn't like to have people talk about Charlotte, and every time her name was coupled with Von Hollman's now, had a perceptible effect on his temper.

"You think it not likely," said Schmidt, "that



your niece, the Prinzessin Charlotte, would think of marrying Von Hollman? You must pardon me," he went on, raising his unwounded hand in a deprecating gesture. "I may seem brutally frank and inquisitive."

"That's all right," said Morgan.

"Charlotte doesn't want to marry Von Hollman, or any one with a title," said Mr. Cameron. "She's out riding with him now in his motor car, and I wish she were back."

"We are old friends, Mr. Cameron," said Schmidt, "and I remember your niece when she was the most wonderful little girl, with blue eyes and golden hair, and I was a sentimental young German with red hair and not a friend in America but you—and the beautiful little Charlotte."

"I remember your poetry," Cameron forgot the unsent telegrams, and chuckled, "and the way you used to keep us awake at night playing the flute."

"Ach, yes," said Schmidt, lighting a cigar.

"The days of our youth were the days of our glory.' But the prinzeßin. It is no longer safe that she remain in Luxembourg."

"What does it all mean?" said Cameron, jumping to his feet and pulling at his white mustache. "Who is Count von Hollman, anyway? Is there no appeal over his head? What kind of a government have you, anyway?" He strode up and down the floor.

"A very good government," said Schmidt, "but an aristocratic government—and there is some rumor that Count von Hollman's birth is higher than his name or rank would indicate. At any rate, although he is a man of the highest ability, he behaves sometimes as if he were a prince of the blood rather than the colonel of a hussar regiment."

"And you—are you as much afraid of him as the rest? Are you attached to his command?"

"Ach, no!" Schmidt took a long pull at his cigar and stroked his red beard. "I am not attached to his command. I am in the Zeppelin service—I know something of the gas and the machinery and the compressed air—thanks to the good Westinghouse Company, where I worked once for living wage—and to the good Americans. My orders—mobilization orders—were to be here at Luxembourg August seventh to report to the head of my division. I arrive here ahead of time and learn that your friend, Mr. Morgan, is to be tried by court-martial. It is a serious business. They are short of officers for the court, and I volunteer to prosecute. I may help that way, and Von Graf, who presides, does not know me as the friend of Mr. Cameron. But Von Hollman—pouf!" Major Schmidt snapped his fingers. "The kaiser cannot afford to punish a man who knows the secret of the Zeppelin gas that will not burn—to please the whim of Von Hollman. I

am a soldier, but also a scientist, and they respect the scientist in Germany."

"Well, what are you driving at, then?" The eternal drone of the distant steam drills had grown a little louder, and the incessant jarring vibration that seemed to communicate itself to the whole house was telling on Mr. Cameron's nerves. "What is Von Hollman going to do? Do you think he plans to abduct my niece by force?"

Major Schmidt knocked the ashes from his cigar and his red-brown eyes were very serious. "If the rumors I have heard are correct," he said, "Von Hollman comes of a most remarkable race—but a race whose men have scrupled at nothing, in the past, in carrying out their personal wishes and desires. And where women have been concerned, this has been especially so." He turned to Morgan suddenly. "You have a motor car?" he said.

"Sixty horse power," said Morgan.

"And passports? And identification cards?"

"I can give him all he needs," said Cameron.

"Then," said Schmidt earnestly, "I would advise you to take Miss Cameron out of Luxembourg at once."

"I can get into Longwy, in France, by midnight," said Morgan.

"Longwy!" Major Schmidt shook his head. "You little realize what changes will take place.

In a week, Longwy will be a German garrison. In three weeks there will be uhlans scouting between the forts of Paris. Germany is up in arms. She is irresistible in the might of her armies." His eye kindled and his voice grew louder and fuller. "There is but one obstacle Germany cannot pass as yet, and that is the sea. Have you a road map?"

Morgan brought a road map, and, going out on the lawn, they spread it on the very table at which they had sat drinking May wine the afternoon before. The same sunlight filtered through the lindens and checkered the velvet grass with shifting patterns of green and gold. They breathed the same rose-scented air, and the Boulevard Adalbert was as still and deserted as ever, for troops had ceased to pass that way. The only difference was the insistent nervous jar of the siege guns wrecking Liège, borne to them a hundred miles on the northern breeze. And yet the afternoon of yesterday and all its talk and happenings seemed as far off as if it had been a thousand years ago.

Morgan spread his road map on the table, using a cigar box as a paper weight against the restless winds, and Schmidt traced out roads on it with a stubby forefinger.

"I have traveled these roads but little," he said, "but I know them well, and the whole coun-

tryside, having looked down on it often from the car of a Zeppelin. It is an easy run to Arlon."

"Yes," said Morgan, "but what's the matter with running north to Spa and then east to Brussels?"

Major Schmidt laughed down in his throat. "My young friend," he said, "you do not realize how fast the German army marches. Spa is in the hands of a Prussian corps, and wherever you meet the Prussian you may know that Von Hollman can throw a loop about you by telegraph."

"How can he stop him if he has passports?" said Cameron.

"A thousand ways. Do you suppose the hand that had the noose at his throat only this morning, the hand that sent you back your messages unsent, will fail to strike again—and strike harder this time? It was to remove the chances of Mr. Morgan's taking Charlotte from Luxembourg that Von Graf, the butcher and the brute, was made judge advocate of the court-martial. There are other Von Grafs in the German army. Other cogs and wheels in the machine."

"Why not go to Ostend?" suggested Morgan.

"There may not be time. To a stranger, to any one at liberty to communicate with the outside world, I could not talk of the plans of the German army—but once Liège falls, there will be a southward movement. The real invasion of France is here in the east. Our western screen of

troops will take Liège and Namur—perhaps they will hold Louvain and Brussels—but Antwerp shall be safe—for a time—unless I should happen to visit it in the air above some night. We will not delay to take Antwerp—there is not time. Just enough of Belgium to protect our right flank and lines of communication, and then on—on into France, to Paris!”

He seemed a little ashamed of his burst of enthusiasm, for he fell silent suddenly and began measuring distances on the map with a folding metric rule which he drew from the pocket of his coat.

“You wonder at me for talking so, you Americans,” he continued, in a lower tone, “but Germany is fighting for life—for more than life—for a place in the sun, to have colonies and thrive and grow like other great peoples. The Slav, with his millions to the north and east, the Slav and the French in the south and west, the English fleets upon the sea! Germany’s to be smothered! All the patient industry of her peoples, all her science, music, art, and letters will avail her nothing unless we strike—and strike now. To respect treaties is well, but a drowning man may clutch at the property of another to save himself, and we meant no harm in Belgium—nor yet in Luxembourg. All we want is a passage for our armies—our soldiers who carry the future Germany with them in their onward march.”

He looked up suddenly, and the old humorous expression came back to his red-brown eyes.

"Mr. Cameron used to laugh at me when I was a young man," he said, "and he is laughing at me now. Mr. Morgan, your nearest seaport is Antwerp, and you must strike for Antwerp, and drive fast and hard. If Liège holds out long enough, you are safe—but south of Namur and north of France, where the eastern army will enter, must be your course. Drive east as far as Alost, anyway—well, east of Brussels before you strike north for Antwerp. And from Antwerp you have the sea, 'the diamond pathway of the sun and moon,' to take you safe back to America."

"Just the same wild talker as ever, Julius," said Cameron, going back to the name he had used when Schmidt was a boy. "But I will say that your heart is in the right place, and that you have some sense. Charlotte shall go with Fairfax, and his confounded chauffeur will have to act as chaperon. Schmidt, I don't suppose you ever drink cocktails any more?"

"Never," said Schmidt, "except when I see you, Mr. Cameron."

"You see me now," said Cameron, striking the bell.

Just sipping his cocktail, Schmidt turned to Morgan, who was still poring over the road map.

"I noticed Colonel von Hollman's busby and cape in the hall," he said.

"Yes," said Morgan, not looking up. "He left them there. What about it?"

"Hide them," said Schmidt.

"What for?" Cameron and Morgan both asked the question.

"There's only one busby like that in Luxembourg," said Schmidt, "and Von Hollman is the only man with a right to wear it. He has honorable rank in the Death Hussars among other distinctions. If Miss Charlotte wore that and the cape, and it were dark, a too-officious sentry might not ask questions, for he would think it Von Hollman himself in the auto."

"As dangerous as that—and with passports?" said Cameron.

Major Schmidt nodded.

"Won't Von Hollman ask for his things?" said Morgan.

"Tell him his orderly was here to report to him, and carried them back to headquarters," said Schmidt; "and hurry. There's an auto coming up the drive now, and Miss Cameron and Colonel von Hollman are in it."

As the count and Charlotte ascended the front steps, Healy was rapidly removing himself from the house in the direction of the garage in the rear. Under his arm were a gray cape and the black headdress of a colonel of the Hussars of Death.

As Charlotte stepped into the reception hall, it



was evident at once that something unusual had happened. Her eyes were very bright, her cheeks very pink—almost red, in fact—and her hair, a most unusual thing with Charlotte, was in slight disarray.

"Count von Hollman," she was saying, in a high, scarcely natural voice, "I must thank you for a most *remarkable* afternoon. It was quite a lesson—almost a *surprise*, I might say."

Von Hollman bowed.

"I am glad to be of service to the prinzeßin," he said. He bowed also to the others. Then something cold, repressed—almost stern—in all three faces made him straighten up suddenly. He acknowledged Major Schmidt's salute with a sharp movement of the hand, then turned toward the hat rack.

"My cloak?" he said.

"Your orderly called," said Mr. Cameron, "and said that he would take it back with him."

"Ah!" said Von Hollman. "Good evening, gentlemen. Prinzeßin, *auf wiedersehen!*"

There were three masculine "good nights," but no word from Charlotte. She stood, silent, pushing her wavy hair back into place, watching the dark figure mount to the motor car, and the car itself turn and vanish down the drive. She turned to face Major Schmidt, holding out both hands, which he clasped eagerly.

"The same old Julius," she said. "I'd know you anywhere."

"And the same fairy princess," said the sentimental Julius, beaming over his red beard.

Charlotte released herself from him and turned to her uncle.

"Julius is a friend," she said, "and so is Fairfax, so I can speak plainly. I'm going to get out of Germany just as soon as I can. It isn't big enough to hold me and that man"—she pointed out the door in the direction Von Hollman had taken—"at the same time."

"What did he do?" said Cameron.

"Don't ask me what he did—or what he said," said Charlotte. Her eyes were blazing and her cheeks were crimson. "And don't you ask me, Fairfax, or you, Julius Schmidt. I never spent such an hour. I won't *think* about it or *talk* about it! But I think he's *crazy*. And he seems to run this whole place—and I'm going to get out of here and back to Boston—and the whole German army can't stop me!" Charlotte's voice, which had been steadily going up, broke into an hysterical little sound, half laugh and half sob.

"My dear prinzeßin," said Major Schmidt.

"Healy!" shouted Morgan. "Roll out the gas wagon. We'll soon be on our way."

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## CHAPTER XI

### "THE OPEN ROAD—AND THE BRIGHT FACE OF DANGER"

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**I**N the scented dusk the motor car, purring softly, swung about the portals of the Château des Herthereux and started west on the wide road. For the moment the distant cannonade, the far-off growl of the War Lord, had stilled its jarring rumble. Once again the beautiful chimes of the church of St. Nicolas were ringing out the music of "Feirwôn," that Luxembourg patois anthem of Lentz, the refrain of which says: "We wish to remain just as we are."

The white road was not as smooth and fair to see as it had been twenty-four hours before. One coil of the great war serpent, the green-and-gray serpent with steel scales, the modern monster of steel and machinery, of men and horses, had been dragged along it, and even in the dusk the tracks were plain to see. The car slithered in and out of new, deep-worn ruts. Morgan, in the rear seat of the car, leaning out and looking down, could

see the tracks of the monster—the impression left by huge, flat, sectional tires—rectangular blotches stamped in the white road metal, like the terrifying footprints of some prehistoric beast.

But no dinosaur could vomit invisible annihilation for miles as this organism could, over a mountain top or a city—to blot out hundreds at a breath or blast into nothing the cunning warrens of concrete and steel contrived against its onslaught.

Now the rear seat of the machine was piled with a different baggage from that which it had carried the day before. Instead of golf clubs and tennis rackets, Morgan had a pair of Lugar automatic pistols. There was an automobile camp kit, a traveling trunk for Charlotte, and in his pockets Morgan carried a sheaf of passports and letters of identification and introduction from Mr. Cameron to various officers he knew in the French and German armies. Besides this, he had money—not letters of credit, but cash, both French and German.

Charlotte sat in the front seat wrapped in the gray military cape, and wearing the black busby with the white skull and crossbones of the Hussars of Death. Surely she was as strange a soldier as had ever worn this sinister insignia. One of the princesses of the royal house of Prussia is nominally a colonel in this famous regiment, and has been often photographed in the headdress and

jacket of an officer. Charlotte was nothing at all like her in figure, which the military cape covered, but in face there was just the faintest resemblance to the Hohenzollern princess in the photographs, wearing the Death's Head busby.

By advice of Major Schmidt, the lights of the motor car were not lit. It was a black car, with no brasswork, and as they felt their way along the road in the first hours of darkness before the moon arose, the car seemed like a deeper shadow in a place where all was shadow.

Morgan had not overstated the facts when he said that Healy was driving one of the best motor cars in Europe. Its engine was a special one which Morgan had secured from a friend in France. It had the four speeds forward, it was practically silent, and it was driven by a man who knew it and loved it like a brother. Healy soon found out where the ruts and worn spots were in the road, and avoided them. As the dusk deepened, their eyes became accustomed to the darkness.

They moved along at a moderate pace, steadily climbing the slow slope northward and eastward. Luxembourg, with its ancient towers, its quiet, industrious, peace-loving population, lay behind them, caught tight in the grip of that inexorable military machine from which they were now trying to escape. The chimes of St. Nicolas might ring out at every second hour their ancient re-

frain: "We wish to remain as we are," but Luxembourg was no longer to remain as it was. She was caught in a coil of the serpent. Bugles were blowing in her peaceful market place, her quiet streets were the bivouac of armed hosts. And to the north, whence louder and ever louder came the sound of the distant cannonade, thousands of the brave Belgians were fighting a hopeless fight, trying desperately to stem the terrible avalanche of flesh and blood and iron.

There were times when both Charlotte and Fairfax Morgan might have thought war a glorious thing, and there were times when Healy, now pale-faced and silent, gripping tensely the wheel of the car, had derided the apostles of peace. But in this hour, as their car climbed the long hill westward, as they listened to the distant reverberation and waited for the moon to arise, they were all oppressed, not by the sense of personal danger, for all in their respective ways were brave and unselfish enough, but by the horror, the folly, the pathos of war. The thousands dead, the peacefully happy fields plowed up by charging squadrons, the innocent children left fatherless, the weeping and desolate women—all this and more of tragedy spoke in that sullen rumble to the north.

It was almost moonrise, and they were far beyond Luxembourg city when Healy, whose steady gaze had never for a second been removed from

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**H E R E ' S   T O   T H E   D A Y !**

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them! But the forests muffled the stealthy march of thousands, and no sound of drum or trumpet on that night, no rocket nor scouting aeroplane marked the German advance.

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## CHAPTER XII

### MR. CAMERON IS TROUBLED

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**R**OBERT CAMERON was in a most undiplomatic mood the morning after Charlotte's departure. The bundle of unsent telegrams and the package of money which the military telegrapher had returned to him the evening before roused feelings which he found hard to hold within the precise, rigid limits of his official decorum.

Never in the quarter century of his experience in the department had the elderly American such extreme cause to forget the dignity of his station. No provocation, however, justifies a display of temper by a trained diplomat. It is an unwritten law of the service. A minister, in theory, may be astute to an uncanny degree; he may fence with verbal foils like D'Artagnan in his prime; he may juggle history, treaties, international law, move principalities or even crowned heads on the chessboard of his negotiations, but he must never forget his official character by revealing even justifiable anger.



Mr. Cameron entered his limousine, therefore, outwardly impassive, although inwardly seething, and was driven to the telegraph office at the corner of the Rue Aldringer and Avenue Monterey. There were few people inside when he entered and confronted the rigid figure of the military censor with a hauteur quite equal to that which the officer assumed.

The censor bowed formally as he took the extended card. Also he peered through the window, scrutinizing the coat of arms on the limousine. A certain civility crept into his demeanor which would have deceived a less experienced man than Mr. Cameron.

The latter produced the delayed telegrams and spread them on the counter.

"May I ask of you why these messages were not forwarded?"

The query was voiced in a level tone not entirely in accord with the flash of the keen eyes behind it.

The censor scanned the documents, all couched in the most idiomatic German at the command of the embassy's secretary. The censor, too, was only a cog in the great military machine which had swept like a tidal wave over the little duchy, submerging its scant ten thousand square miles of territory and every function of its former government to the exigency of the Fatherland.

Consequently, while he abated no whit of his

civility, the unyielding automatic obedience demanded by his superiors permitted no reason for any reply other than that given when the telegrams had been returned.

"Military necessity, Herr Cameron," he replied, in tones as devoid of curiosity, interest, or sympathy as the bang of a wooden shuttle in a loom. "Those are the orders." he added.

Mr. Cameron held himself firmly in leash. This stolid oaf was only obeying blindly. Nevertheless, it was quite without precedent, at least in his own diplomatic experience, to have the official messages of a foreign envoy shunted aside on such a meager pretext. While nothing might come of it, Mr. Cameron's innate Scottish obduracy impelled him to go further, especially as his delayed dispatches were in regard to the recent extreme jeopardy of Morgan and Healy.

"I desire to protest against either delay or refusal upon such flimsy grounds. On behalf of my government, I again request that you receive and transmit these messages to Berlin."

He pushed them forward and counted out the amount of tolls with aggravating slowness, consulting the rate book and even pointing to each separate charge in order that no loophole could be found for any later refusal on other grounds.

The censor hesitated. The inflexible policy of the empire, based on Bismarck's epigram, "*Durch Eisen und Blut*," left him no choice. But "blood

and iron" were essentially military, while this personage was a diplomat. The telegraph official disliked diplomacy, of which his ideas were most vague. He heartily wished the problem had been put before his colleague, who had just gone off watch.

"I regret, Herr Cameron," he at length replied as he returned them, "that my orders are imperative and admit of no exceptions."

"Very well," snapped Mr. Cameron, replacing the documents in his portfolio and turning toward the door. "I shall immediately transfer my request to be placed in communication with the German minister of foreign affairs——"

He broke off as Count Otto von Hollman stepped into the office. The young German commander was in a new mood. He carried himself with a jaunty air.

"Ah! The excellent Mr. Cameron!" said he genially.

"Colonel von Hollman," punctiliously returned Mr. Cameron.

"You seem disturbed." Von Hollman's smile was as frank and winning as a boy's. He positively radiated friendliness. "May I be of service to you in any way?"

"I cannot say." Mr. Cameron was as frosty as Von Hollman was warm. "I have not been able to obtain transmission of my official tele-

grams since Germany has occupied Luxembourg. Have you any idea why?"

If Von Hollman's surprise was simulated he was a good actor.

"My dear friend"—his tone was caressing—"this is most extraordinary. You say your official telegrams have been refused?"

"Twice." The curt monosyllable showed how indignant the speaker had become. "And some of them were of extraordinary importance," he added, after a pause.

Von Hollman turned toward the censor.

"Orders," reiterated that individual, anticipating the unspoken question as he saluted.

Von Hollman's smile broadened.

"You see," said he, turning to Mr. Cameron with a suggestive shrug of his shoulders, which conveyed more of a disclaimer than any words. "These fellows are merely automatons. They do not understand that every rule has its exception." He turned severely upon the censor, who was blinking his dismay. "Accept Herr Cameron's telegrams hereafter for immediate transmission. As an envoy of a neutral foreign power, he is especially privileged."

The censor saluted. Von Hollman turned apologetically.

"Military necessity, Mr. Cameron, covers a multitude of inconveniences. May I offer the hope that you have seen the most extreme instance

in this unwarrantable delay? I trust you have not been irreparably damaged."

Mr. Cameron unclasped his portfolio. He retained one telegram, handing it to Von Hollman.

"You may best judge of that," said he. "Military necessity is scarcely so plastic or elastic as to exclude the official messages of an accredited minister—ordinarily."

"You are quite right," agreed the other, handing back the telegram protesting to the German minister of foreign affairs at Berlin at the arrest of Morgan and Healy. "Also," he went on more earnestly, "you will, I am sure, acquit me, especially of any desire that such a lamentable delay should have transpired. I was very busy yesterday, you know, selecting the officers for Mr. Morgan's court-martial, and was careful, as the verdict of the military court will bear me out, in seeking unprejudiced men."

Mr. Cameron recalled Schmidt's comment regarding Judge Advocate von Graf, but diplomatically held his peace regarding that phase of the affair.

"It is of no consequence—now," he remarked placidly, "since Mr. Morgan has left Luxembourg."

His casual glance toward Von Hollman caught that officer unprepared. The American was sure that the statement jarred him. His jaw dropped,

his eyes widened. For an instant he was disturbed.

"Left Luxembourg!" There was no doubt that Von Hollman had received a surprise, and Mr. Cameron was pleased to see it was an unpleasant one.

"With my niece last night," supplemented Mr. Cameron. "Why not? They are both American citizens and anxious to get out of the zone of hostilities as soon as they could, and they had passports properly viséd."

"No reason at all that I am aware of." Von Hollman recovered his composure. "By the way, my friend, have you heard the news? I am glad I happened upon you, for I am leaving within an hour."

He took the other's arm as they left the building.

"Things have been altogether too snarled for the last week for me to notice much except the necessities of these marooned countrymen of mine," parried the minister. "Not all of them, I regret, are so fortunate as to possess a high-power motor and equipped with funds to finance a journey to Ostend or Antwerp."

Von Hollman ignored the quiet thrust regarding Morgan's flight with Charlotte. Some other thought seemed to engross him. His face glowed with some strange sort of enthusiasm, and there was an indefinable something in his next words

which suggested a certainty by no means entirely reassuring.

"You will be tremendously interested, I am sure," went on Von Hollman, with almost boyish vivacity. "We have driven the French and English troops out of Belgium and across the French frontier. The Army of the North, according to the previous plans of the general staff, has effected a juncture with this corps at Charleroi. The Belgian resistance will soon be crushed and the remnants of their army sent off toward Antwerp."

He paused, noting the disquieted expression of the minister's face. It was a Roland for Mr. Cameron's Oliver—Morgan and Charlotte had leaped from the frying pan into the fire.

Mr. Cameron was stunned. The German advance had been miraculously rapid, and he fancied beneath Von Hollman's unruffled composure there was repressed self-satisfaction.

Charlotte and Morgan were somewhere out in the Ardennes!

Mr. Cameron pulled his mustache, and turned inquiringly toward Von Hollman. That extraordinary young man seemed to be thinking of much the same thing as himself, although he made no reference to the two people in whose welfare Mr. Cameron possessed so vivid a personal interest.

There was something uncanny about his next

words—he seemed to be reading and interpreting the identical ideas in the minister's mind.

"Do you realize, Mr. Cameron," he continued, a dreamy light suffusing his eyes, "what all of this means? *Ach*, my friend, it is a great day!—the day to which we have long looked forward. Think you we have forgotten our past humiliations at the hands of these sordid, dollar-loving nations? We had concessions for trade with Bagdad, and who prevented the building of the railway? England, jealous and fearful of trade supremacy in India."

Trained by years of service abroad to recognize sophistry and artistic dissimulation, as well as to probe beneath the surface for the hidden motive, Mr. Cameron caught the trend of the words. The quiet assurance of this purposeful young man chilled him. The main body of the French army was already in Alsace and Lorraine. There seemed that morning scarcely a chance that Germany could be checked before reaching the very gates of Paris.

Their stroll had brought them to the steps of the Hôtel de Ville. There was much flitting to and fro of orderlies, a knot of staff officers were leaning on their sheathed swords, their eyes bent expectantly in the direction of the pair. Their faces were respectful, but suggested impatience to be off. Von Hollman's armored car was thrum-



ming softly, and the deferential chauffeur held wide the door.

"We shall see what we shall see," replied the young man, with another of his brilliant smiles, as he extended his hand. "At any rate, Mr. Cameron, it has been a great pleasure to exchange views with one so well versed in such matters. *Auf wiedersehen*, my friend!"

He was gone. Mr. Cameron could only gaze at the cloud of dust in the wake of the car thundering down the Eich Road. Then he recalled Von Hollman's words in the light of other meanings. Fairfax Morgan, his niece, and even the insufferable Healy might be cut off from Ostend. Admitting they could penetrate the French frontier, they would find the Germans already in front of them. Most decidedly Charlotte would see more of the creature she detested, unless—— But the chances of escape seemed slighter and slighter.

His hand still tingled with Von Hollman's grip, and he rubbed it uneasily against his rough tweed coat. Had it been his own native courtesy or some magnetism on the part of Von Hollman that had made him grasp the outstretched palm? Mr. Cameron was sorely troubled. He stood there in the sunlight, pulling his white mustache, an erect, dignified, homely figure, strangely in contrast with the martial pomp that filled the duchy. He was thinking hard. Was it his military duty that called Von Hollman in the direc-

tion taken by Charlotte and Morgan? Or was it his desire to see the girl again? He was perfectly sure that something disagreeable had happened between him and Charlotte, but he knew her too well to question her. And Von Hollman, gauging her character well, had taken advantage of her natural refinement and delicacy and felt safe in the assurance of her silence.

After all, thought Mr. Cameron, Charlotte could take care of herself, and no matter what Schmidt had said about Von Hollman, he wasn't absolutely insane as yet. He was sorry now that he had told Von Hollman of her flight, but that was too late to mend. And Fairfax was a capable young man; and although Healy was absolutely intolerable, he knew how to drive a car and was resourceful and quick-witted.

Mr. Cameron heaved a deep sigh. He was anxious, but it seemed as if they had done the wisest thing. He had plenty of other cares and plenty of work. Just at present any one preaching peace would have found a ready convert in Cameron. He hated the measured tramp of feet, the drumming and trumpeting. The peaceful, industrious thrift, the atmosphere of good will and content that had made Luxembourg such a delightful, sunny backwater on his river of life was gone forever, so far as he could see. It was an armed camp, full of the pomp of war and the rumor of war. The distant boom of the cannon

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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was never out of his ears. And his niece, whom he loved far more than he had ever said to any one, and Morgan, whom he regarded almost as a son, were dashing along, somewhere far to the west, through unknown perils, and as lost to him for the present as if they were at the north pole. All he could do now was to write messages—and behind all his industry was the feeling that the messages might never be sent and his industry be quite for naught.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ZEPPELIN

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ONLY once, before the warming, dew-dispelling arrows of the golden dawn broke through the tree-studded pass up which they were speeding, did Fairfax Morgan lean forward to speak to Healy at the wheel. The chauffeur assured him they were on the road leading to Arlon.

His employer wanted to be quite sure that they were getting as far away from Luxembourg as the mountainous character of the country would allow. Under normal conditions, or anything approaching them, the young physician would have scouted the idea of leaving the comparative security of the Château des Herthereux. But conditions were not normal, and, what was worse, Morgan was growing more and more convinced that Otto von Hollman, either in his civilian or military character, was likewise not normal. Morgan had never delved deeply into mental eccentricities. He much preferred the surgical branch of his profession. But his studies and what experi-

ence as had come to him in such matters inclined him strongly to the belief that there were some phases of Von Hollman's behavior that savored of paranoia.

It was, consequently, with considerable relief to Morgan that their dash into the Ardennes had thus far been unchecked. Not once, with the solitary exception of the vidette which they had flashed past a short distance from Luxembourg, had they seen any sign of German troops.

On the whole, it seemed likely that there was still a slender chance to penetrate to Namur, where, behind the protection of the Belgian line, they could ask to be sent on to Ostend, only four hours by steamer from England. Namur was a fortified town, and likely to prove a further stumblingblock in the kaiser's strategy, if Etienne Martin's prophecy was correct that the main German advance into France could not be made until Belgium had fallen. From the dilatory tactics of the huge masses of troops in and around Luxembourg, piled on the French frontier, but obviously waiting for some other event to transpire before they plunged forward, Morgan, although knowing little of military tactics, concluded that the French aviator had been right.

They drove steadily through the hills, therefore, following the Namur Road. The majestic beauty of the serene dawn filtered over the hills; little beams of grayish light stole through the

leaves of the old trees, shifting uncertainly in the breeze, falling in luminous patches upon the road ahead.

Healy switched off the lights as they began a steep climb.

The forest around them broke into song. They crossed a bridge, spanning a tinkling waterfall. No hint here of the bloody feud which had burst overnight; no rumble of passing artillery, no pad of feet of marching soldiers, no creaking of ammunition wagons or hospital trains.

The peace of the forest of the Ardennes, rousing from its sleep with untroubled majesty—as it had roused for centuries, save when the legions of Cæsar or the warring tribes of many men in later years had at rare intervals fought over these same tree-crowned hills.

All the little things along the road seemed to radiate a welcome to the harassed heart of Fairfax Morgan. At that moment he loved the fallen, rotting branches, the tussocks of moss clinging to the gray rocks, and the touch of the cool air seemed filled with an exquisite delicacy.

They passed a house some distance back from the road, perched in lovable loneliness in a tiny cleft between two hills. Flowers bordered the path leading up to it; they nodded to the climbing machine. On another of the foothills, some distance from the road, a deer stared out at them, then plunged into the covert of waving green,

whose night shadows might have been populated by dryads and fauns, so very old was this ancient place.

Wilder and more grand grew the scenery as they continued to climb. At last, when only a short distance from the summit and opposite an old tree blasted by some lightning stroke, Healy slowed down.

"That rear shoe is dragging," said he. "I've got to pump up the tire."

Morgan nodded and turned to look at Charlotte.

"I've had a nap," said Charlotte, in a matter-of-fact tone. "Where are we?"

"A little over halfway to Namur," said Morgan, glancing at the speedometer. "It's about a hundred miles from your uncle's place, and we've come nearly sixty-five."

Healy was studying the tire with anxious eyes.

"On the level, I hate to worry you, boss," he interposed, coming around by the side of the car, "but I have to put in a spare tube or I'll be runnin' on me rim in another half hour."

"I'll help you," declared Morgan, springing out of the car.

Charlotte also descended, stretching her arms luxuriously, turning her pink-and-white face up toward the soft beams of the sun. While they adjusted the spare tube and replaced the wheel,

the girl walked slowly ahead up toward the apex of the hill.

Both men were so engrossed in their task that they did not observe her hurried return. She was by their sides as they hastily threw the tools into the box and prepared to resume the climb.

As they came around the corner of the machine, Morgan saw the strained look spreading over her face.

"What is it?" he asked.

She pointed toward the top of the hill.

"I'm not sure. Perhaps I'm mistaken, but it seems to me that there's something or somebody over the other side."

"Stay here!" commanded Morgan, as he went on toward the crest.

Near the crown of the hill he turned aside into a field. The thick trees shielded him from the view of any one in the highway, but it also concealed whatever was beyond. He wormed his way through the tangle of wild berry vines, grass, ferns, and saplings which grew thickly between the large trunks.

He was sure that he could hear movements floating up from the vale on the other side. Try as he would, however, it was impossible from there to discern whether it was troops or merely a harmless group of peasants working at their usual tasks.

A large birch towered high above the surround-



ing trees. Morgan crept over to it and climbed resolutely. He wished it were an elm or a maple with lower branches and thicker foliage. Maneuvering as best he could to keep his body behind the trunk, he clambered higher and higher.

He found he had chosen well. The little valley below, one of so many between the succession of hills, was spread out like a map. At first he fancied Charlotte was mistaken. The road was stretching white and peaceful up over the next incline. There was no sign of any one or anything—not even a house.

"Probably some cattle," muttered Morgan to himself, noting a stretch of grazing land farther on.

Still, it was odd that there were no animals in sight if it had been cattle. Cattle would be feeding at such an hour, and the forest offered scant provender compared to the lush grass of the open space.

A leafless sapling caught and held his eye at the very edge of the fringe of the thickets below. It was very slender, very still, and leafless. Morgan rubbed his eyes and peered again.

He fancied he saw the tree move slightly.

"I must be going crazy," he told himself.

The tree moved again.

This time Morgan knew that he was not mistaken—although it was not a tree. It was a slender lance of a uhlan, whose soft-footed mount

stepped lightly into the clearing like a horse entering the circus ring.

The uhlan glanced around. Another followed him, another, and then another.

Behind the last came still more, sweeping into a column of four, trotting across the field until near the fence between them and the road. Then, galloping easily, they vaulted the obstruction into the highway.

Farther along, and toward the crest of the next hill, an armored automobile glided out of the trees. It, too, turned into the Namur Road, topped the crest, and disappeared. Behind the machine came a little knot of infantry, swinging steadily along with the precise "march step" of the indefatigable army which had traversed Luxembourg.

It was a scouting party, with cavalymen out on its flank, apparently bound for Namur. The uhlands were already reconnoitering the other side of the road.

Morgan slid down the tree. He had little thought for the military tactics of the movement he had just seen—cavalry who could screen and protect any advance, the armored auto with its deadly machine gun to support the cavalry or enable them to fall back if they uncovered the enemy in force. He thought only of the bitter disappointment which was theirs as he returned to the machine.

"We must go some other way," said he. "The Germans are already between us and Namur."

"Aw, what do we care?" cried Healy. "We got our passports, doc. And we're not only Americans, but we've taken the oath not to fight against them. They hain't got no right to hold us up, have they?"

"Might makes right in this neck of the woods." Morgan felt that he was speaking the truth. "If it were not for Von Hollman we'd be all right. But if he should telegraph, as he's likely to do, what then? No, we'll have to go around, Healy."

Healy seemed to find the reasoning sound. At least, personally, he had little desire for more German jails. He turned the machine back down the hill until they came on another, less-traveled highway, leading west and into the forest.

"Isn't it exasperating!" said Charlotte, as they started climbing again.

"Very," assented Morgan; "particularly in view of the fact that if we had been an hour earlier we should have been thirty miles farther to the north—either in Namur or past it."

"And now?"

"Well, so long as we can keep out of the scrap itself, I think we'd better aim for the French frontier, either by way of Givet, Chimay, Beaumont, or even at Mons—as a last resource. These fellows can't be everywhere, you know."

They topped the hill and coasted down the long incline beyond, Healy prudently conserving every drop of gas. The road was not paved, but surprisingly good for one so little traveled, and, since taking it, they had not caught sight of a house.

"Are you hungry?" asked Morgan.

"Ravenous!" retorted the girl.

"Well, as soon as we've put a few miles between us and that detachment, we'll turn into the woods along here, and have breakfast. I have some concentrated coffee, some tinned biscuits, milk, and meats."

"It's your turn to sleep," observed Charlotte, as Healy purred steadily west and north.

Up and down the wooded heights, in the solitude of the remotest chain of hills making up the Ardennes, now and then flying past some open-mouthed peasant who blessed himself at the fantastic death's-head the girl was wearing, or shrank back in fear at the gruesome omen, they reeled off the miles.

But Morgan had little inclination to sleep. The strain of reaching the frontier only seemed to make him more alert. He suggested, instead, as they plunged farther and farther into the thickly wooded hills, that it was high time to gratify Charlotte's appetite.

"Three quarters of an hour since we turned off, and we done twenty miles—not bad for this kind of a road," announced Healy as they drew up be-

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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fore an ancient ruin, whose moat had shrunk to a grass-grown ditch and whose crumbling masonry warned them not to come too close.

A spring bubbled up near it.

They were all glad to leave the machine. Motoring in the picturesque Ardennes has charms, but one grows less conscious of them when a harrowing fear is just behind. Notwithstanding the fortunate way they had avoided the troops on the Namur Road, there was something in the incident which depressed all of them. Even Healy, usually ready with some quaint remark, was becoming taciturn if not actually moody. A dim realization of the grim, relentless tragedy skirting Luxembourg settled down on Morgan particularly. He had, of course, realized that actual war was on. Hitherto, however, the fact had been an abstract one. It was apart from him. Now it seemed to be creeping up, nearer and nearer, and becoming more concrete and tangible.

All three, nevertheless, found in the homely task of preparing a meal a sort of relief. Each was anxious not to be a "kill-joy" to the other two. Healy uttered a few sarcastic complaints regarding the superiority of the New York water system over a spring whose approach made it hard to negotiate without muddying the contents.

The breakfast was a success, and as they were concluding Morgan smiled over his final cup at Charlotte.

"It's a feast," he averred. "Not a detail missing—even to the classic death's-head."

"Oh," remonstrated the girl, clapping her hand to the busby of Colonel von Hollman, "I'd forgotten all about it. What shall we do with it?"

"Chuck it on a pole and leave it standing in this old ruin," suggested Healy. "With that long cloak, it'll make a perfectly good ghost. Every ancient castle ought to have a good ghost," he judicially continued, draining the coffeepot to the dregs. "On the dead level, this place needs a ghost."

"Here's the death's-head!" Charlotte held the hussar's busby in her hand.

"I don't know," said Morgan thoughtfully. "Of course you can't go on wearing it in daylight. Suppose we tuck it under the seat, with the cloak. It might come in handy again some time, especially the cloak, which is a good protection against the night air."

Charlotte, who had camped out many times, rinsed and wiped the dishes with deft fingers, Morgan watching her from the machine, where he was aiding Healy to replenish the gas tank from one of the extra containers. They were flying from the Germans, but there was a lot of the German about Charlotte.

The presentiment of evil had departed. Morgan and Charlotte chatted over the prospects of the voyage back to America as they kept on. The

trees were thinning out a bit, and signs of civilization grew more numerous.

Their detour, after all, did not seem to be so much of a disappointment as they had been led to believe, when they came upon a fork in the highway, with a signboard shaped like a fist, pointing ahead and labeled "Givet."

The road, too, was much better, but this, too, might have other than favorable compensations. They were far more likely to encounter troops upon the solidly built and well-kept highways than in the hills. Still, there was virtually no choice open to them. They could not turn back to Luxembourg; the chances were that north they would surely encounter difficulties, especially as Ostend and Antwerp were the only available sea-ports—and Antwerp was also likely to be cut off—more likely than Namur or Ostend because of its greater harbor facilities.

There was nothing for it except to keep on toward Givet, and Healy sent the car along with all the speed compatible with safety.

He drew up abruptly, and without apparent reason, after they had motored steadily forward for a half hour.

"Did you hear anything?" he demanded of Morgan.

"Not a thing," said the physician. He was, in fact, surprised. They were now approaching the last crest of the more westerly Ardennes. Mor-

gan was sure that only a few miles away was the valley of the Meuse River, here practically a part of the frontier.

The road ahead was visible for some distance, and it was smooth and clear. Not even a donkey cart intruded upon the field of their vision.

Healy's face showed that he was perplexed.

"I was sure I heard somethin'," he announced. "It sounded like a kid poundin' the head of a barrel after he's spread a tablecloth over it."

"I heard nothing," said Charlotte.

"Aw, I guess I'm dreamin', then." Healy threw in the clutch.

But he was not satisfied. He peered into the woods on each side of the road; he even twisted to look back along the way they had come. He opened his own muffler to save power on the next ascent, and when he cut it off at the summit, he slowed down, listening like a man who hears the stealthy footfalls of some night intruder in his house, yet cannot locate the cause.

Then he stopped dead.

"I knew I heard it," he said, turning to look at Morgan.

Morgan listened again. This time he could hear something which reminded him of a partridge drumming against a log. Only there seemed to be a whole flock of partridges—and they evidently had taken to drumming as a very serious pastime.



"It can't be cannon," said Charlotte.

"Nix," said Healy. "It hain't guns—but what is it?"

"I have no idea," said Morgan. "Anyway, so long as it isn't fighting, we'd better keep on toward Givet."

Healy started, but seemed more apprehensive than before. The mysterious throbbing, dulled, but growing more distinct, made him vastly uneasy. The road here was lined on each side by splendid trees. The science of forestry, entailing severe penalties for those who destroy arboreal growth without permission, was evidently respected in this part of the Ardennes. The trees were very tall, carefully trimmed, and their boughs almost interlaced above the road.

Suddenly Morgan uttered an exclamation and pointed out toward the south. Charlotte and Morgan followed his finger.

Not two miles away, and perhaps a thousand feet in the air, a tremendous Zeppelin was gliding lazily along. But the slowness of its movement was only apparent, as they immediately discerned. At the height and without stationary objects by which it could be compared, it seemed sluggish. Only the constantly increasing size of the bulk indicated that it was approaching with the speed of an express train. The mystery of the far-off throbbing was solved.

The throbbing was the explosion of its motors

—a half dozen of which propelled it through the air, from side to side, or up and down.

As they watched, a cage was being swiftly lowered at the end of a long, slender cable. It swung rhythmically in long, sweeping undulations, while the great war bag itself seemed to be rising higher.

Absorbed in the magnificent, although ominous, spectacle, Healy had permitted the machine to go steadily onward, until reaching a gap in the great trees in the road. Awakening then to a sense of their imminent danger of discovery, he threw in the reverse, with a shout of warning.

The big automobile leaped back under the precarious shelter of the arched trees as if it, too, divined with dread its formidable rival, plowing its way through the intangible element overhead.

At almost the same instant a flash of fire burst from the swinging cage. A shell screamed over the trees and exploded with terrific force against the wooded hill on their right. Healy, without waiting for instructions, whirled the automobile and drove it into the thicket alongside the road.

It seemed to the three that the screaming shell was the cue for which unseen actors innumerable had been waiting. The tumult which followed the discharge had something theatric in its terrible suddenness. One moment it had been peace and solitude. The next the furies were loosed. The echo of the flying projectile reverberated from the hills. Then, while the great war balloon

swept past over their heads, the echo was utterly drowned in an answering roar.

Stunned, deafened, they could only crouch like rabbits in the scant protection of the undergrowth and wait.

There was still no sign of troops upon the highway itself—the very place where he had expected to meet armed men, if at all. Morgan could only account for it on the theory that the Zeppelin, coming up from the south, had discovered an ambushade ahead of an advancing German column, probably on the other side of the hill along a road parallel to that on which they had been driving.

He was partially relieved, for his first thought was that perhaps Count Otto von Hollman had sent the air craft in pursuit of Charlotte and himself. That idea, however, was palpably absurd. With all allowance for Von Hollman's hatred and jealousy, he could hardly find a way to employ such extreme measures. Germany had more enemies than three inoffensive tourists. At the same time, aside from the immediate menace of their position, Morgan fervently wished they had been a few miles farther along and well behind the French line. It would be particularly trying to be enmeshed by another German detachment, after having once so narrowly escaped from Von Hollman's clutches.

Having done their utmost, however, they must now await the issue.

The firing grew slightly less. Also, from the sound, Morgan judged that some one must be getting the better of the argument. The discharge of the nearer guns over the hills on their right was still vigorous, but the replies seemed feebler.

Presently conversation was again possible.

Morgan's fingers closed down on Charlotte's. The girl seemed to divine his anxiety on her account, and there was something sweet and reassuring in her clasp.

"We cannot be far from Givet," he said. "Maybe it's only a skirmish. We'll know in a little while. It's lucky we were on this side of the hill. That German column this morning must have kept traveling west on another road north of this one."

Healy's only reply was to jump out of the machine. Their rear wheels were sinking in the soft mud alongside the road. In the presence of the greater menace none of the party had noticed that the treacherous marsh into which Healy had blindly driven was now almost to their hubs.

Morgan went to his aid. They procured branches, pried, lifted, and tugged. Several times Healy started the engine, but for some minutes all their efforts to extricate themselves were unavailing. The chauffeur especially found this newest complication most annoying. The firing was now

more distant, and as the road ahead was still without any visible occupant, Morgan worked harder to extricate the automobile before some other catastrophe closed down on them.

"Drat the bloomin' luck!" exclaimed Healy. "Doc, we've got to build a regular corduroy road to get out of here. See, I can wiggle her loose, but what's the use? We'll only get into another hole."

"Can't you back out?" asked Morgan.

"Not on that grade. We've got to take it head on, and I'll have to give her all the gas she'll stand. Let's get some more wood."

"I hate to ramble too far among those trees," said Morgan, pausing. "There's no telling what we'll run into or what kind of a welcome we'll get."

"That's so." Healy scratched his head. "But what we going to do? We can't stick around here."

"Listen!" exclaimed Charlotte.

There was a muffled rumbling along the highway in the direction from which they had come. It was a new and mysterious note in the symphony of war—loud but not penetrating, ominous but indefinable.

"Look!" muttered Healy, pointing the opposite way along the stretch of road leading over the rise toward Givet.

A solitary horseman, whose brilliant uniform

was topped with a cuirassier's helmet, rose cautiously above the crest. The sun shimmered back from his saber and the gleaming helmet of his headdress. The gray horsehair plume hung gracefully motionless in the still air. He checked his horse and peered sharply up the road.

"He's French, all right, all right," exultantly whispered Healy, as if fearing his voice would carry over the two hundred yards which intervened between them.

The clamor behind them grew louder. The Frenchman spurred his horse.

The next instant the crest of the hill two hundred yards ahead was swarming with other and similar figures. The column poured up and over the slope, swiftly deploying into battle line across the road, leaping the low walls on either side, and spreading out along the fields. With uncanny swiftness their blue jackets, white crossbelts, and waving plumes blotted out the grayish trunks through which they emerged, and it seemed to Morgan that the green branches above were already dripping crimson, although he knew the eerie feeling was merely the sight of the red trousers the soldiers wore.

The muffled thunder up the road behind them was now prodigious. Charlotte, looking back in its direction, reached out and clutched at an overhanging branch. Morgan, following her gaze, and at last comprehending this newer and nearer

danger, leaped into the tonneau, followed by Healy. Both men threw their weight on the limb. Under their combined efforts the leafy boughs above them bent lower until they masked the tonneau of the mired machine from view in the highway.

Absurd and pitifully inadequate as the expedient seemed, there was grave need for even this scanty protection.

Less than half a mile up the road along which they had been traveling in fancied security until the appearance of the Zeppelin, coming at a trot, was a body of German cavalry. A trumpet sounded, shrill and penetrating. They broke into a gallop.

The horses filled the highway, running like thoroughbreds in the stretch, bellies low, feet far out. Low on their outstretched necks with black lances poised, with faces set and tense, crouched the grim riders.

The roar of the hoofs was comparable to nothing except, perhaps, the roll of a great cataract. The firm, hard road, with its slight layer of powdered dust, burst upward like spray when water meets granite from a far height. It curled and eddied around the hoofs of the vanguard, rising higher and higher, until it cupped over the column like a husk around an ear of corn.

With straining eyes, peering through the scanty foliage that served to screen them from view, Mor-

gan, Charlotte, and Healy watched the head of the squadron thunder past.

The dust cloud, made up of infinitesimal particles finer than flour, floated over them through the shrubs, coating the green leaves, settling down upon their garments in an impalpable powder, filling their eyes and nostrils.

They could no longer see the road, much less the crest of the hill beyond.

Then, amid wild, hoarse shouts, the indescribable, piercing cry of wounded horses, and the thudding impact of desperately fighting men, the German column struck its opponent on the grassy slope beyond. It was a hideous, rasping, grinding crash—a chaotic clamor, punctuated now and then with a bugle's strident note, raging yells from the living or anguished screams from the dying, the ring of steel on helmet, the discharge of carbines or pistols, oaths, commands, imprecations.

Charlotte hid her face in her hands, and half turned away, but the other two watched, spell-bound.

The clamor of artillery broke out afresh on the hills to the right, and the acrid fumes of powder from the incessant discharges drifted with the dust down the wind.

The stream of horsemen continued to pour along the highway. It was impossible to estimate their number—the column was endless and the impetus of their mad advance, Morgan



guessed, had swept their opponents over the crest of the hill. They kept to the highway. Their war maps had scheduled even this remote section of the Ardennes—at any rate, none of them attempted to detour through the miry ground.

The three watchers lost all sense of proportion as the battle raged on. It seemed an eternity before the last horseman, invisible in the dust, clattered along the highway and the charge had passed. Charlotte clung blindly to Morgan, whose arm ached with the strain of holding the branch down upon the machine. He peered at Healy, likewise engaged, dumb with the fearful spectacle of the charge and the horrid tumult of the engagement.

Although utterly ignorant of military tactics and unable from the very nature of things to do more than guess at what was transpiring, Morgan's straining ears caught less and less of the din of the conflict and more and more of its aftermath.

The sounds of fighting were giving way to moans and groans. After a time even their own heartbeats were almost audible. Morgan judged that the Germans had won the hill, and perhaps passed over its crest. Yet he feared to move. Death lurked behind every leaf in these woods and hills.

The dust cloud began to settle. Save for an occasional groan from a fallen man there was

again comparative silence. The physician knew that they must extricate the machine and get out of that locality somehow with all possible speed.

When he finally released the limb his arm was numb with the long strain. The sun, shining red through the haze, was already near the tops of the trees.

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When the moon looked down upon the Givet highway where had occurred the "first clash of cavalry patrols of the real combatants," in the dim light the heaps of dead were being combed for men still animate.

In a charcoal burner's hut near the fringe of the forest, Morgan, Charlotte, and Healy were answering the questions of Colonel Fernbach, the officer in command of the German cavalry division. The rear guard had discovered and detained them for examination.

"Your destination?" curtly demanded Colonel Fernbach.

"We were en route to America," quietly replied Charlotte Cameron in German, "when the troops overtook us."

"You have passports?"

Charlotte handed them over with a smile. "Herr Morgan," she explained, "is a physician. The automobile is his, and we were so unfortunate as to run off the road and found it had been getting the machine out of the mud." the surgeon

"S-o-o!" drawled Colonel Fernbach, twisting his military mustache and scrutinizing Morgan and Healy closely as he read their descriptions and looked at the photographs that accompanied them. Evidently he found nothing amiss with the papers, which he returned with more kindness than he had received them.

"A doctor, eh?" he repeated. "*Ach!* We have need of many."

"I shall be most happy to do what I can for a while, at least," volunteered Morgan, at which the commander brightened visibly.

"My men will bring in the wounded to this clearing," said he in passable English. "Our own hospital corps is behind somewhere——" He waved his hand vaguely to the east. "Perhaps they are on the other road—our detachment came this way to protect the left flank."

Morgan sent Healy to the machine for his kit of instruments. In a brief time Charlotte had water boiling, the physician had sterilized his hands and instruments, and presently he was bending over a mere lad, whose pallid face showed he was near the edge of the dark river so many of his comrades had already crossed. Colonel Fernbach watched with discerning eyes Morgan's technique as he applied artery forceps and still he dipped the gash which a lance had made when occasional through the boy's sword arm. He nodded

his approval, and spoke in an undertone to an aid as they left.

Charlotte, pale-faced, but firm-lipped, was already sacrificing lingerie for bandages. Farther away, under the tall trees, whose spreading branches gave the clearing and its dim aisles beyond the aspect of some great cathedral, the survivors of the brigade were reforming.

Sentries were posted, horses picketed; a few small camp fires over which pannikins of coffee were brewed twinkled among the trees. But, once the demands of appetite had been supplied, these were carefully extinguished, while the men, who had marched forty miles before fighting, sought rest. Down the same Givet road, later on, rumbled other motor-driven vehicles; in the front ammunition wagons; next baking vans, whose cooks forgot sleep while they labored, and at last, some time after Charlotte had retired within the hut utterly worn out, the long-awaited ambulance corps.

It was the German war machine from behind the scenes and a swift inspection of such work reached Morgan had been able to do with the driven thrallities at his command was made by in charge. He stepped over to confer Fernbach, after his examination of an had cared for. The colonel left of officers with whom he had been personally accompanied the surgeon

back to where Morgan was sitting on an old log.

"I am told that you have been most expert, Herr Morgan," said he. "The Fatherland is not ungrateful. It is a sad time and I deplore the interruption of your journey. Perhaps it was, however, fortunate that you met with your accident when you did, else had my men ridden over your car."

He spoke slowly and with the careful precision of one using an alien tongue, but the kindly and wholesome smile was most welcome to his listener.

The chief surgeon introduced himself after Colonel Fernbach returned to his conference, and over their pipes, while the dead were being decently interred in the moonlight, they chatted. The chief, it appeared, had been in America and spent some time in Bellevue.

Healy, who had meanwhile busied himself in looking after the car and preparing a little food for Charlotte and his employer, strolled back and listened.

"America should be our friend," declared the German doctor. "If we have her kindly thoughts, we shall win. See that man?" He pointed to a desperately wounded soldier of middle age who was being carefully lifted into an ambulance, which, almost immediately, rumbled to the rear. "There is the German spirit. No man, high or low, shrinks from his duty in this deplorable war. He is one of the greatest synthetic chemists in

Europe. It was his brain which gave us camphor from turpentine. And on the same cot with him lies a farmer boy. We are a united people, our cause is just, and we shall die to a man, that the Fatherland may win."

The talk drifted to New York, its magnificent harbor, the great civic organization, the assimilation of alien peoples, its future destiny.

"We envy you," vigorously declared the surgeon. "Compare your vast country with ours. Germany is doubled back upon itself. You have millions of acres, capable of supporting ten times your present numbers. Also you have no menace from enemies on all sides—save only in your colonial possessions. *Ach!* If America could only understand what we of Germany must endure! And how will it end? Why, even Japan has leaped upon our back in the Orient. The kaiser's prophecy of the yellow peril is realized—and by Germany, isolated, hemmed in, first of all. You are privileged to go on to your country—to peace and plenty. Life and love wait for you. But for us"—he swept his hand around the circle of the trees—"who knows what lurks in the shadows?"

"Say, doc," whispered Healy, as the surgeon bade them good night and went back to his corps, "I've got the car out of the mud, 'nd begged ten gallons of gas from a kid on one of their supply wagons. I take back a lot I been sayin' about

these Dutchmen. They're better'n I thought—at least this bunch is. Are you goin' to sleep here?"

Morgan decided that he would. Sleep was the most desirable thing in the world just then. The strain of their flight from Luxembourg, the harrowing peril of the day, and his unremitting work until the arrival of the German field hospital tired him utterly.

He grunted his thanks to Healy as he accepted a robe the thoughtful young man had brought over from the automobile, and was asleep before Healy could follow his example.

Charlotte was smiling at him from the door of the hut when Morgan woke. He shivered a little, for the morning was chill with the breath of coming autumn. Healy was already awake, and Charlotte soon had a pot of coffee ready over the alcohol stove. The chauffeur had driven the automobile to the hut, explaining that he feared it might be commandeered, unless near the tent of the division officer.

Watching for a favorable opportunity after their hurried meal, Morgan strolled over toward Colonel Fernbach's quarters. He was quite cordially received, considering the multitude of duties occupying the officer's mind.

"If my request is one which may properly be made under such circumstances," began Morgan, after exchanging greetings, "I would be glad to

have a safe-conduct through the German lines from you. Our position, as you may imagine, is very hazardous, particularly Miss Cameron's."

"With all my heart," returned the officer. He scribbled a few words on a piece of paper and handed it to Morgan, who thanked him.

"I cannot, of course, guarantee your safety," returned the colonel, "but I have certified that you are noncombatants and requested all German officers to extend you whatever aid is in their power to get out of the zone of hostilities. Good luck to you."

He watched Morgan aiding Charlotte into the car. He twisted his mustache to hide the mist which came unbidden into his stern gray eyes. Charlotte was much like his own daughter, and his heart ached for this German *mädchen*.

Morgan explained to Charlotte, as Healy drove back toward the highway. They had no alternative but to keep on toward Givet. The detachment of cavalry under Fernbach's command was not the main column—merely a screen thrown out to protect a larger body of troops farther north, as they had suspected.

At the same time, they were compelled to proceed cautiously. As Fernbach had declared, he could not assure them of safety. War is uncertain at best, and Morgan realized that precipitate action might involve Charlotte in even more ter-



rible hazards, should he rush blindly forward into some *mêlée* similar to that of the day before.

Had it not been for the nearness of the French frontier, he would have turned back toward Ostend. With Fernbach's safe-conduct and their passports, they would be likely to experience few delays from German troops. Still, all officers were not as humane as this one had proved, nor as considerate of the rights of noncombatants. So Morgan, on reaching the road, gave Healy orders to proceed slowly in the direction of Givet, and Healy was about to comply when a shout rang out behind them.

Morgan turned, wondering.

A knot of officers in a field to the right were scrutinizing them. All were mounted, and one of them, with no helmet and a bandaged head, somehow had a familiar look to Morgan.

"Drive on, Healy," said he. "I'll explain to this fellow."

The solitary trooper galloping in their direction was brandishing a pistol, but as he was undeniably German, Morgan, impatient to be off, merely waited for him to come abreast of the slow-moving automobile.

"Halt!" roared the trooper, now much nearer.

"Halt nothing!" growled Morgan, feeling for his papers. "Who is that fellow, anyway?"

Charlotte's reply was lost in a loud report.

The galloping orderly had deliberately shot

into one of the rear tires, and the machine skidded. Had it not been for their moderate pace, they would have left the crown of the road. Healy set his brakes hard.

An instant later the hoofbeats behind them drew up alongside.

"Why do you not halt when ordered?" demanded the orderly, brandishing his pistol dangerously close to Morgan's head.

"Why should I halt?" angrily shouted Morgan, as Charlotte translated the question.

He thrust his papers out to the waiting man.

That worthy grunted. Suddenly Morgan saw other men closing around the machine. One of them was the figure who had been so closely scanning him through field glasses.

He looked up into the cold eyes of Major von Graf. Von Graf, with a bandage about his head where Major Schmidt's sword had left its mark—but Von Graf otherwise well, able, and malevolent.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT COUNT VON HOLLMAN HAS A LONG ARM

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**T**HERE was something in the slow, appraising look which Von Graf bent upon Morgan and Healy that reminded the young physician of a torpid snake.

Morgan, thoroughly angry at the injury to his machine in the face of his neutrality, recalling his oath not to bear arms against the Germans taken in Von Graf's presence, and his rights as an American citizen under the safe-conduct on which the ink was hardly dry, waited quietly.

"So!" drawled Von Graf, "it is the young Englishman who was tried by the military court at Luxembourg."

"And acquitted," said Morgan, holding the officer's hard eyes with his own unwavering gaze.

"And he's not English," said Charlotte.

"You should have been convicted," dryly re-

torted Von Graf, without hesitation. "You were guilty."

"I am not interested in your opinion," said Morgan, his face reddening in spite of his self-control. "The verdict of the court is on the records. By what right do you instruct your men to fire on my car? It strikes me that you are assuming more authority than your government may care to sponsor!"

Von Graf ignored him, motioning for the passports which Morgan produced and handed to the orderly, who was still holding Colonel Fernbach's safe-conduct.

He handed them back to the orderly, who likewise mechanically returned them to Morgan.

"Well, sir! Are we at liberty to proceed?" tartly demanded Morgan.

Von Graf's effort to force him to face a firing squad came back, and with it an anger which he found hard to hold in control. This disagreeable friend of Von Hollman's was about as unpleasant as a man could be, and Morgan was one of those uncertainly dangerous individuals, slow to anger, but, once aroused, likely to run amuck. He realized that he was at a terrible disadvantage, but the first flame of his righteous anger was deepening into a deliberate ferocity.

Von Graf, watching him, gathered something of what was passing in the American's mind. For all of his authority, the major would find it diffi-

cult, if not impossible, to find a colorable pretext upon which to detain these three. Their papers were in proper form, they were citizens of the United States, and it was one thing to shoot down a harmless peasant in the fields or villages because of some imaginary resistance and quite another to find a suitable excuse for an injury to an American citizen—evidently of some consequence in his own country.

He made no reply at all, but watched the Americans with his cold, dead eyes.

"Healy," peremptorily ordered Morgan, "get out and put on a new tire. Then we'll be on our way, unless Major von Graf has some well-founded and urgent objections to the contrary."

Healy descended from the car and jacked up the rear axle, indifferent to the nearness of the horses. The little Irishman was very quiet and cool, but he was evidently in a temper himself.

There was a jingle of accouterments in the rear of the group. The other officers of Von Graf's escort were all subordinate to him by virtue of their rank. Military discipline forbade them to interpose, but Morgan, quietly scrutinizing their phlegmatic faces, realized that Von Graf was not receiving even a tacit support from his own men.

"Hello! Have you met with an accident?"

Colonel Fernbach's voice was almost solicitous. He saluted Von Graf perfunctorily, and rode alongside the automobile, peering down at Morgan

and Charlotte. There was genuine concern in his face, and Morgan noticed that Von Graf frowned.

"You might call it that," said Morgan indifferently. "I do not know whether the shot which was fired was aimed at my head or not. It happened to hit the wheel instead. Are you still in command of the cavalry here?"

"Certainly." There was a note of hauteur in Colonel Fernbach's reply, and his glance toward Von Graf had a little more than mild inquiry.

"Then," interpolated Morgan, quickly following up his advantage, "I am right in assuming that your safe-conduct and permission to proceed toward the frontier are still in force?"

"Why not?" said Fernbach, this time more acidly than before.

"That was my own idea, colonel," smoothly replied the physician. "I merely wished this gentleman"—he indicated Von Graf—"to receive the same assurance from you verbally that you gave to me in writing. I am, it seems, stopped here by his instructions."

Von Graf flushed.

"I desire that these people be detained," said he to Fernbach.

The colonel of cavalry shook his head.

"Then it must be upon your own authority," he replied obdurately. "They are citizens of a neutral nation. They do not bear arms against the Fatherland—in fact, Herr Morgan gave our

wounded very material assistance yesterday. Their papers are correct in form. I am aware of no accusation against them, unless you desire to prefer one. Otherwise, they are free to proceed."

Von Graf beckoned to Fernbach, and they stepped aside.

"I must again request that you detain these people," said he. "It is the wish of His Excellency Count von Hollman——"

The other made a gesture of decided dissent.

"Pardon me, Major von Graf, I am attached to the Army of the North, and my military instructions are from others than Count von Hollman. I repeat, these people, so far as I am concerned, are free to proceed toward the frontier."

Von Graf glared. The unexpected refusal served to incense him the more.

"You are an officer of the line," he persisted. "I am of the staff——"

"Of another army corps," cut in Fernbach. "Major von Graf, there are certain regulations governing war between nations which my oath to my government compels me to respect. One of them concerns neutrals. The American minister at Luxembourg has viséd passports for Herr Morgan, his chauffeur, and Miss Charlotte Cameron. I would have you remember that Colonel von Hollman——"

It was Von Graf's turn to interrupt.

"Brigadier General von Hollman, if you please, colonel. He has been brevetted for gallantry."

"I had not heard of it," coldly returned the other. "But, major, in spite of what you say, I must still insist that the wishes of Brigadier General Otto von Hollman are of no military significance to me. My orders are from my immediate superiors, and these, in turn, are transmitted from the Board of Strategy at Berlin. I must say to you that I do not care to discuss the matter further. My duty is with my men. If you wish to detain these people, it will be upon your own responsibility, and I shall so inform Herr Morgan."

He turned his horse back toward the machine. Von Graf, speechless with chagrin, followed. Morgan was groping under the rear seat for a tool which Healy desired. The spare tire only needed some adjustment to the rim and the car would be ready to proceed. Von Graf turned back to them, still muttering protests. Morgan was pawing among the litter of their baggage, and Healy stood waiting impatiently for the special wrench his employer was seeking.

"They are spies, I tell you," repeated Von Graf, turning his heavy face full upon Colonel Fernbach's indifferent one. "If they are allowed to proceed through our lines, there may be consequences of the gravest character. We tried both these men for aiding a French aviator to escape



from Luxembourg the very night of our occupation. Through the inability of a private of uhlans to recognize them, we were unable to convict them. But they were guilty—that I know," he affirmed.

Colonel Fernbach hesitated.

"Doctor Morgan was acquitted at a court-martial," said Charlotte.

Von Graf was growing impatient, in his cold, heavy way.

Like all bullies, he was an arrant toady to those above him. The exigencies of war meant for him the hope of promotion which he had coveted for years. He was attached to Otto von Hollman's service, and the count's wishes were his law and military necessity.

Besides all this, Von Graf knew what few other officers of the German staff knew—although Von Hollman's rapid rise gave them ample reason to believe that there were other influences than mere bravery or ability behind the young colonel. Major von Graf knew more about Von Hollman than most.

Von Hollman's personal request that Von Graf keep a sharp eye out for the whereabouts of Charlotte Cameron and her two friends when the major had been sent from the Luxembourg corps to confer with the staff officers of the Army of the North, was the secret of the officer's insistence upon the detention of the three Americans.

He had in him a heavy persistence, and the refusal of Colonel Fernbach to acquiesce with his plans simply stirred it into action. If that officer persisted, one of the very things Von Graf was most anxious to achieve would be left undone—and Von Hollman, as the major knew, was not entirely engrossed in matters military.

Yet he had no choice but to defer to what Colonel Fernbach had so quietly enunciated. He had not the slightest proof that Morgan and Healy were enemies of the Fatherland—no scintilla of evidence to back up his assertion that they were spies. He blocked the path of the motor car, still determined.

Morgan, already angry, and growing hotter with his failure to find the wrench he was looking for, gave a vicious jerk at a mass of carefully folded material in the far corner. He thrust his hand under it unthinkingly. His groping fingers closed over the tool he was seeking. At the same instant that Morgan drew back and started to rise, Major von Graf and Colonel Fernbach were directly abreast of the tonneau.

"Here it is, Healy," gasped Morgan, pulling the tool from the farther corner and starting to hand it over the edge of the tonneau.

As he pulled it out, he noticed that something was caught in its jaws. But, intent only upon getting the tire properly set and hastening with all possible speed toward Givet before progress

in that direction was again cut off, Morgan did not notice what it was that he had unwittingly dragged out into the view of the two German officers.

Von Graf, however, peering intently down into the machine, and still racking his brain for some clue, however slight, that would back up his assertion regarding Morgan's true character, grunted.

"So!" he said. His extended hand pointed toward some object in the bottom of the machine. Morgan, amazed at the repressed triumph in Von Graf's voice, turned and stared stupidly down in the direction of the major's finger.

He saw the busby that Count Otto von Hollman had left hanging on the hall rack the night he had insisted upon taking Charlotte Cameron for the automobile ride—the same night the girl had fled from his noxious presence. There was no gainsaying the damning character of Von Graf's accusation with such evidence before his own eyes. Morgan was chilled and dumb. A more superlative fear than he had experienced the night of his arrest in the château for aiding Martin's escape swept over him. He was speechless, motionless—staring blankly down upon the ghastly skull and crossbones gleaming spectrally white against the dark background of the headdress.

With a swift motion, Von Graf swung himself sidewise in the saddle and dragged the busby and

the cloak from the machine. He dangled it triumphantly before Colonel Fernbach's eyes.

"If these people, colonel, as you have several times assured me, are merely noncombatants, peacefully proceeding from Luxembourg toward the nearest frontier, and if their papers are in proper form, can you explain why it is necessary for them to be carrying such a disguise as this?"

There was no reply from the commander of the cavalry force.

"Especially," went on Von Graf deliberately, "when it happens that these identical articles are the personal property of General von Hollman, and were in the Château des Herthereux, where the general had been dining the night these three surreptitiously left Luxembourg."

Colonel Fernbach's face was very stern and cold. He glanced at Morgan with an expression which made the American wince. Although conscious of the utter falsity of Von Graf's accusation and the malign character of everything which, thus far, it seemed, had conspired to prevent his getting Charlotte Cameron out of the pit of hell which the war had dug for them, Morgan knew it would be useless, especially with the damning record of the previous court-martial behind him, to offer any explanation.

"This, as you say, Major von Graf," replied Colonel Fernbach, "is sufficient proof to justify your assertion that Herr Morgan may have some

ulterior motive in his haste to reach the frontier. However, I can only offer you my apologies for my seeming blunder. My place is with my regiment, and I have tarried too long, I fear, as it is. You will have these people thoroughly searched, and, as you suggested in the first instance, I see no reason now why they should not be detained to await the arrival of General von Hollman. As the offense occurred in territory under his jurisdiction, the matter of dealing with it is, of course, out of my hands."

He saluted, and was gone.

Major von Graf turned to issue an order to his men.

Healy spat out a muffled oath as he tossed the wrench which had caused all of their newest and gravest trouble back into the tool box. If he had only followed out his hunch and left the busby and cloak in the ruined castle the morning before, there could have been not the slightest pretext for Von Graf's second trap. As it was, they had walked into it like children. Healy knew that they would not so easily escape a firing squad a second time; for Robert Cameron, in spite of his crusty ways and his personal umbrage at the free-and-easy relationship existing between Healy and his employer, was of the right sort. Had it been Luxembourg where this exasperating event had occurred, Mr. Cameron would certainly know how to protect them. At the most, probably, they

would be compelled to endure another more or less prolonged period of confinement in German dur-  
ance vile.

But this was not Luxembourg—worse luck. They were in Belgium—maddeningly near the French frontier. And Von Graf's face, now set in stern, rigid lines, showed both the chauffeur and his employer the quality of mercy which they might expect at the hands of his subordinates. The court-martial this time would be drawn with an eye single to conviction. There would be no generous-minded, forgetful witnesses whose failing memory would upset the swift, ruthless plans of this tool of Count Otto von Hollman's.

"Military necessity" would be written opposite the death warrant which the court-martial would sign. It would, as a mere matter of form, be forwarded with their passports and more trivial personal belongings to Mr. Cameron. Healy wondered if they would use red tape on the papers and sealing wax, and, if so, what particular one of the grim circle of helmeted figures around them was intrusted with such occasionally used articles, and where he carried them.

For the first time since he had known Fairfax Morgan, the chauffeur saw a look of unutterable despair settle down over his employer's face. It confirmed his own horrible forebodings—that fixed, desolate expression, coupled with the dull, sodden face of Major von Graf.

The German whose insistence had precipitated their latest dilemma was issuing a command. Healy, again in a daze, descended from the machine. His clothing was searched. The lapels of his coat were torn open. He stood in the road, feeling very cold. It was odd, for the day was warm. He heard the orderly directing Miss Cameron and Morgan to descend.

Charlotte needed no invitation to descend. She jumped to the ground and advanced on Von Graf.

"I took that hat and coat," she said. "I wore them. Not as a disguise, but to keep warm."

A grunt of astonishment from Von Graf was the only answer.

Charlotte repeated her statement, this time in German—and now Von Graf and several of the other officers laughed aloud.

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## CHAPTER XV

### HEAVY ARTILLERY

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**T**HE ridicule which followed Charlotte's statement was natural. Neither Von Graf nor the members of his staff could appreciate the freedom and independence of the average American girl and her custom of doing whatever she pleased.

Their faces said very plainly: "This is a clever attempt on the part of this young lady to shoulder the responsibility. It is too transparent for belief—or else it is a sample of American humor."

Charlotte was more annoyed than alarmed. The whole thing was so simple—to her. But Von Graf's uncompromising demeanor brought her back to a half realization of things as they were. Morgan and Healy were facing a very ugly situation.

"I am very sorry, Miss Cameron," said the major, "but I will have to detain this car and these others."

The girl did not seem to understand.



"They are under arrest," continued Von Graf, as he started to ride away.

"Wait!" cried Morgan imperatively. His face was pale, but it was the livid white of rage.

Von Graf turned haughtily toward him. Even Healy was alarmed. Morgan looked as if he would leap upon the German and drag him from the saddle.

"What about Miss Cameron?" demanded the young physician. "Is she under arrest, too?"

"No. She is not under arrest."

"But what is to become of her?" shot back Morgan. "You take away the car, you arrest the driver, and you leave an American woman in the middle of the highway—without any protection whatever. I protest against such treatment—regardless of your pretended authority."

There was a barely audible murmur of approval from the other members of the staff. Von Graf turned his cold, expressionless face toward them. They grew suddenly still.

"There is a house yonder," said Von Graf. "Miss Cameron will be cared for, and as soon as military necessity permits she will be allowed to proceed."

"Very well," said Morgan. "Another question, if you please: How long do you propose to detain us here? I would remind you that we, too, are Americans."

"That will also depend," evaded the major,

fixing his dull eyes on them, "upon military necessity. Your cases will be brought before the military tribunal in due time. It may be necessary for me to detain you until Count von Hollman arrives."

Morgan thought it well not to press the matter further. From the speaker's tone, the alternative he had in mind before Von Hollman's appearance was not pleasant to contemplate. Despite his emotionless manner, the German staff officer had made himself plain. They would be summarily dealt with unless his superior should first happen upon the scene.

They were wedged back in the car, a soldier sitting between Morgan and Charlotte. Healy, with another alongside, was ordered to drive to a little cottage some few yards up the side of the hill. Here Charlotte was escorted to the door by a staff officer. His imperative rap disclosed a very frightened old woman. Judging from her decrepit appearance, she had not been able to leave with other members of the family.

The terse commands she received appeared to reassure her, and she smiled kindly upon Charlotte, as the girl, with a last, longing backward look at her friends, reluctantly went inside. The machine rumbled away, regained the road, and turned back toward the charcoal burner's hut where they had spent the night.

They left the automobile here. Both were per-

mitted to retain a little food and a few articles of clothing, all of which was probed for papers or concealed weapons, with true Teutonic thoroughness. Morgan's case of instruments was confiscated. A squadron of infantry had poured in since they had been turned back. The faces were all new—even to the omnipresent physicians of the staff hospital, and, as Healy pointedly whispered, they were "a fierce-looking bunch."

There was a long and earnest colloquy between Von Graf's aid and the infantry commander. It was in German, a little distance from the hut, and neither Morgan nor Healy could understand the words.

The staff officer came back.

"You will remain inside," said he coldly. "If either of you come out until directed to do so, the sentry has orders to shoot you."

"Thank you," said Morgan. "And when we get orders to come out, I suppose we will be shot just the same. The matter is quite simple, is it not? Will we be permitted to send word to our relatives or friends?"

Von Graf's underling did not deign to reply. A moment later they saw him galloping back toward the road. Their automobile had disappeared.

"Well," said Healy, half cheerfully, "they might give us a couple of decks of cards, doc. Wonder if we'll have time to learn how to play

pinochle? I've always wanted to wise up on that game. Mebbe if I could get this Von Grafter into a red-hot session at a quarter a corner he'd forget the two of us."

Healy had never uttered a complaining word since first their troubles began. Even now, with this new menace gripping them fast, he could jest at their unenviable situation.

"We're not dead yet," smiled back his employer, his heart warming toward the loyal little fellow.

"No, glory be!" ejaculated Healy. "And we got a chanst—if some of them French ginks should take it into their heads to like this particular piece of woods, mebbe they'll come over. The chestnutin' looks to me like it's gettin' fine!"

Morgan shook his head. There might be fighting in and around the place where they were. War is made up of waves of advances and retreats. But the mettle of the German fighting machine looked formidable enough. The men were automatons. Death, to these soldiers, was only an incident of duty. There was little likelihood of their being driven back.

All of which he told Healy quietly.

"There's Napoleon," obstinately averred Healy. "And the Duke of Wellington. The French licked all of the country oncet. And the English came along and whipped the French afterward."

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## HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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"In a way you are probably right," conceded Morgan, a little surprised at the stout-hearted manner Healy persisted in "coming back" at him. "But you overlook one thing. This isn't a skirmish line to-day. It is the headquarters of a ranking staff officer. Major von Graf has probably come over here on military business. His running into us was a piece of the same hard luck we've been playing into all along. That indicates that this section of the country is believed to be held securely, and also that it has been selected as the place to plan the next move in the big game. We have no way of knowing how far out in front the German troops are already. That brush yesterday was nothing compared to the big event."

"It was a pretty lively preliminary," insisted Healy. "Well, if they get the main heavyweight event goin', we got a better chanst than if it was only a couple of try-outs. Everybody'll be sittin' as close to the ring as they can sit."

There was a rattle of accouterments outside the building. The infantry were falling in line. The door of the hut had been wrenched off, and from their position on the little knoll, they could see the ranks of the various battalions as they filed down into the Givet Road. Likewise, now and again, at quite a distance from them, but not too far to be clearly heard, the sullen boom of big guns broke forth.

A galloping orderly met the head of the advancing column. He delivered his dispatches to the first officer he met. The infantry broke into a double-quick, and moved rapidly up the little knoll toward Givet, debouching into the woods.

Another and another regiment followed the first. Other masses of troops deploying through the fields, past the hut in which they were confined, and on all sides of them, moved hastily forward.

A group of engineers emerged into the clearing and strung a portable wireless telegraph between two great trees, the motor car in which they had ridden up thrumming steadily, furnishing electric power from its dynamo to the storage batteries. More artillery came rumbling down the road—long, slender field-pieces, mostly motor-driven, although some of the lighter guns had horses. All vanished over the crest of the hill.

Something that snorted and puffed laboriously rumbled into view. It was a traction engine, dragging one of the enormous Krupp guns that make the German attack so formidable. Slowly, methodically, but steadily it rumbled past, keeping carefully to the crown of the unusually good road. Just at the foot of the hill it halted.

Behind the monstrous piece of ordnance proper came other vehicles—supernumeraries to the stellar attraction. There were huge, motor-driven wains, a ponderous truck fitted with a great crane,

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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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other wagons filled with gray concrete blocks, and still others, one with a circular steel platform on edge and bristling with levers.

At the word of command, a troop of sappers and engineers demolished the fence on the south side of the road, placing the stones in a sort of a pavement, on ground which was carefully tested. The siege gun creaked out upon this cautiously, its caterpillar sectional wheels halting at almost every stone, like an elephant testing a bridge. Then it stopped. Other men, meanwhile, working with top speed but in so efficient a fashion that they did not hinder each other, were already at work building a base for the gun.

The surface earth of the hill was scraped aside until it was as level as a floor, and the rocky ledge beneath was quite bare; one of the trucks with the white blocks was driven alongside; they were dumped automatically, seized on by the waiting men, and the first layer of the great base carefully laid. Over this were laid thick planks the moment the crevices and surface had been covered with cement, which, meanwhile, was dumped from sacks and mixed with water; another series of blocks and planks was laid upon the first, and yet another, until the triple area had been knit together into practically a solid foundation.

With the aid of the traction engine and the crane, the monster gun was coaxed, nursed, persuaded upon the improvised foundation.

Swiftly, silently, and with the precision which comes only with repeated practice the engineers and their aids worked. At last the helmeted figure waved back the mechanics and the bronzed artillery officer stepped to the concrete floor. Other men, bearing bayonets with one edge serrated and with short-handled axes, who, with fine sense, had darted into the woods, now returned, dragging a slender pole.

This was placed about a dozen yards at one side, and, after a stout steel pulley and fine steel cable had been threaded to its upper end, the lower end was thrust into the deep hole already waiting for it, and the earth rammed about the base. In a trice a slender youth was in the loop of the cable, and being hoisted aloft.

He did not, however, seem to be interested in what lay beyond the crest of the hill just below which the orifice of the siege gun was gaping at a menacing slant toward the gracious sky. His glasses leaped to his eyes, and he looked, instead, back in the direction from which they had come, sweeping the air with long, slow circles.

A tiny speck, hovering above and miles to the rear, flashed into the field of the watcher's vision. He wigwagged a signal, in abrupt, jerky movements. Then he was lowered to the base of the pole. The traction engine puffed back to the highway; neat mounds of ammunition were taken from the wains, piled in their baskets under



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steel shields; the wains followed the traction engine; the engineers and sappers started across the field, where, farther along, another traction engine was puffing and straining across the rocky slope with a second gun of the same character; and while the crew of the first were oiling bearings, swabbing out firing chambers, testing the breech-locking apparatus, and grooming the great death dealer with final touches, a monoplane drifted down upon them like a giant dragon fly.

The same instant the wireless operators in the knot of men nearest the hut conferred in excited tones; an officer ran over from the gun; the Ruhmkorf coil spat viciously; an answering puff of smoke spurted in jerky dots and dashes from the tail of the circling monoplane; it scuttled to the rear, swung in a circle, climbing higher and higher, and dashed out over the tops of the trees, flying at an elevation of a mile and a half toward Givet.

As it disappeared, the men on the platform where the gun was now resting became more active.

As they, in their turn, reported to the commanding officer, saluting as punctiliously as if on dress parade, and then fell back to the trucks carrying the properties for this "headliner" act in the drama of war, two other groups advanced with long steel levers, which fitted at either side into sockets. The gun carriage swung for several

degrees to the right, then to the left, until its muzzle had swept an arc of ninety degrees in either direction.

Four motor-cycle riders took up their station near the field wireless, the operators of which were sitting with intent faces, oblivious to all except the ticking in their heavily padded transmitters. Over by the gun the men were stuffing their ears with cotton, binding it in place with adhesive bands around their heads; also they turned their visored caps around.

Another monoplane fluttered into view, circled, and shot off to the south; the little knot of officers and men around the crackling coil seemed to become suddenly energized; one of them wrote rapidly and passed the slip of paper to the officer in charge, who hastily unrolled a small chart and began making computations, using a pair of dividers and a small steel scale.

In turn he, too, scribbled a message. One of the cyclists received it, pedaled away, straining against his handlebars, riding recklessly through the gap in the fence to the first gun station. The captain of the piece received it, scribbled a few memoranda, returned it, and the rider shot across the fields and was lost to view.

There was a hoarse command. The officer behind the gun stood close to the slow-turning carriage, hand uplifted, until the great, squat cannon had swayed into place. His hand dropped. The

men at the levers removed them; the piece lowered ever so little, and now stood firmly upon the massive foundation; four other figures came running up from behind; the enormous breech swayed open; the projectile was thrust home; the men fell back.

A man wearing the chevrons of a sergeant, arm extended, gripped a long steel ribbon, and stood with his knees bent, his eyes fixed on the gun captain's hand, his mouth wide open.

The crackle of the wireless coil was lost in the terrifying belch of echoing gases. Morgan and Healy, each with hands clasped over their ears, in the first instant following the stupendous reverberation, thought they would never hear again.

The back swirl of the displaced air and the expansive gases which had hurtled the gun's great projectile miles beyond the crest of the hill was hardly less frightful. It boiled, whirled, sucked, and eddied up, down, and around the little clearing.

Right behind the first cyclonic swirl and before the earth had ceased to tremble, another discharge burst from the gun farther along and out of the range of their vision. Then the hosts of hell seemed to volley up and wrench at the elements—the earth rocked, the trees bent hither and yon, the acrid stench of smoke filtered down in the back draft of each succeeding discharge.

The artillery duel was on.

But in the interim between the deafening blasts from their huger brethren, other guns were now sometimes discernible—their more frequent discharges like the notes of a saxophone in the ensemble of an orchestra where the great basses are playing fortissimo.

And while the roaring grew until hearing became a lost art, lithe figures of armed men were creeping in hordes through the woods, crawling on their faces across the fields, sometimes carrying boughs of trees or wisps of grass to mask their advance.

Under cover of the incessant rain of shells, the first line of infantry were taking their final positions for the moment of the charge.

Morgan, who until now had been watching the placing of the monster gun with eyes so fascinated that he forgot the rest of his surroundings, saw, with some surprise, that a field-hospital tent had been stretched near the brook between them and the road. An ambulance came in, rolling leisurely, and one of the knot of surgeons who had been sterilizing their instruments in the pot of boiling water over the fire they had kindled, began to care for the first wounded. They were cavalrymen, members of a party on scout duty, "feeling out the enemy." Another ambulance came in, and the interval between its arrival and that of the third was somewhat shorter. The general advance, however, was not yet begun—all of

these men were skirmishers. Another *aéroplane* flitted back, but so high up that it was impossible for the officer scrutinizing it with glasses to tell whether it was friend or foe—an audacious mite of a thing, supreme in its security—scorning any weapon of earth to even disturb its pilot's equanimity.

Now the trickle of ambulances was more frequent; another brigade of infantry was passing, the men deploying through the woods, or taking every advantage of whatever cover was afforded in the open places—like boys who have raided an orchard and are fearful of being discovered.

These were the reserves.

Still farther to the rear were yet other waiting men—each full panoplied in the regulation equipment, carrying rifle and bayonet, intrenching tool and clothing, food and ammunition, identification disk and first-aid kit. Slowly but steadily they advanced, and behind them poured yet other thousands and tens of thousands—an endless procession of automatons, each ready to die for the Fatherland.

The ambulances were now flying up, discharging their loads, and whirling madly back again toward the front, the red cross glaring from their sides or waving from the hoods of their motors a pitiful apology, it seemed to Morgan, for the real needs of the stricken men when the battle proper began.

Came at last a trumpet's peal, and the massed men in the woods were running instead of walking. Out somewhere in front, the first division was crashing into the enemy. But back here, aside from the occasional drone of a vagrant bullet, the great flag which had been hoisted over the field hospital warned away the missiles that were falling thick and fast in other sections of the forest—the symbol of mercy interposing in this isolated place where all around them was raging the relentless lust of men bent on dealing death ere they met it themselves.

The sickening, acrid smoke drifted groundward, as if it were determined to stifle those whose shattered bodies yet strove for breath while they waited for the surgeons who were now working hard and steadily.

Stunned with the incessant discharges, choked with the smoke which grew more dense with every shot, Morgan and Healy forgot even the presence of their stolid-faced guardian, whose remorseless walk to and fro in front of the hut was all that remained to remind them of their own danger.

It was incredibly more ghastly and horrible than either had been able to imagine. As Healy had remarked, the brush of the day before had been only a "preliminary" to this main event. It was obvious that the two great divisions of the German army were in touch at last, and both thrusting at the entire French frontier.

The number of the wounded continued to increase so rapidly that the surgeons and their assistants could scarcely continue their work. They littered the whole space between the road and the forest. Already it was evident the capacity of the field hospital was taxed far beyond its resources. Some of the injured were trying to dress their own wounds from the field kits. Others, too badly injured to move, could only wait their turn. Morgan absolutely forgot his own invidious situation in his sympathy for these hapless, helpless hundreds, stricken down in the prime of life, shattered, maimed, dying.

An officer came over toward the hut. He presented an order to the sentry, who saluted and stood aside. The officer entered.

"You are a surgeon?" he curtly asked Morgan.

"In America, yes."

"If you care to aid us for a while it may be that your services will be considered when your case comes before the court-martial."

Morgan flushed.

"Not on those terms," said he, raising his voice to make it audible in the horrid din. "As a surgeon, I shall be glad to do anything in my power. As an American citizen, I stand upon my rights. You may so inform your superior, Major von Graf."

The officer hesitated. "Major von Graf is

with the staff at the front," said he. "It is not possible to reach him now."

"Very well," said Morgan, "I will do what I can. My instruments were confiscated."

"I will get them," said the other. "You will please understand that you are still in custody. This sentry will accompany you. Your servant may go with you."

In the hours which followed, Fairfax Morgan saw more of surgery than the average physician in many years of practice. Likewise he lost forever the illusion that modern warfare is more humane than the barbaric battles of ancient peoples.

Until now, in common with many other physicians, Morgan had been under the impression that the modern, high-speed, small-caliber bullet was more merciful than its predecessors. His first patient showed the folly of the theory. The soldier had been struck in the shoulder by a French bullet—a long, slender affair, made of copper and zinc. The missile had glanced from the soldier's rifle barrel, ricocheted, and entered the tissues in the shape of a hook. Fragments of clothing had been forced into the wound.

Morgan did all that he could, and hurried to the next man. Healy aided him, passing instruments and bandages. The poor chap's back was torn by a bursting shrapnel shell—Morgan removed five bullets besides the fragments of the missile itself. The other doctors were also work-



ing like demons. They did not even see this tall, athletic American in civilian garb. If war had become "humane" with the progress in science and arts, it was strange that none of these gasping victims of the conflict bore any evidences of it.

Rarely had the men stricken by French rifle fire the privilege of being wounded or killed by a bullet flying as it left the barrel. Most of the fighting had been done at long range, as one slightly wounded patient told Morgan. But even at five hundred yards the terrible missiles had not only great penetrative power, but an explosive effect that splintered bones so terribly as to almost justify the charge that "dum-dums" were being used. Other wounds incurred at still greater distances not infrequently ground bones to powder.

Terrible as these effects were, however, they were comparatively "humane" compared to those from shrapnel, "the devil's watering pot," or the shells from the Creusot guns of the French batteries. The larger shells not only cut like razors, but they amputated, crushed, and even seemed to disintegrate portions of the bodies where they struck, so utterly appalling was their destructive force.

The agony of the wounds was heightened by the high temperature of the fragments the instant after the explosion. No sedative could give surcease from such superlative pain—except the mer-

ciful morphia—shrouding the last moments of men hopelessly injured.

Morgan wondered why some examples of the stories he had heard of men shot with high-velocity bullets through the chest, and who walked to the rear without aid, did not appear. These were never in evidence. The unbelievable character of the injuries recalled to his mind the historic siege of Constantinople by Mohammed. In those days war made no pretense at humanity. Mohammed hurled granite cannon balls from brass guns. Many of his projectiles weighed more than a thousand pounds; some close to a ton. Yet they could scarcely have had the destructive effect of the modern gunfire, certainly they could never have spread over an area of from thirty to a hundred square yards, like the shrapnel.

They went back to the hut to gulp down a little black coffee and munch some of the food they had taken from the automobile. A brief period of rest, and Morgan, still closely guarded, was back at his merciful task.

So passed the long afternoon—hours crammed to overflowing with the endless procession of wounded and dying—interminable, desolating hours, without parallel in the history of the world.

Men's lives were nothing in the titanic struggle. Fresh troops from time to time poured past along the Givet Road—indifferent, from their

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dogged, stoical demeanor, to the ghastly stream of ambulances which turned aside to give these fresh regiments the right of way. The living could fight—the wounded could wait.

There was one compensation in it all. The little brook behind the field hospital, purling peacefully along its rocky bed, furnished water in abundance. From time to time Healy went farther and farther up the source, for the stream below was now as red as if it flowed from the hearts of the numberless victims of the ambitions of monarchs.

The soldier guarding them, however, relaxed none of his vigilance. He narrowly watched Healy on each of his journeys, and the chauffeur knew that any effort of his to escape would have ended in a shot.

Utterly engrossed in the task he had voluntarily assumed, Morgan toiled on through the waning afternoon, oblivious to everything except the demands upon his professional skill. He was brought back to a sense of other things at last, as he noted that the number of arriving ambulances was growing fewer and fewer; the roar of the battle out in front was muffled, and the fire of the great guns on either side was slackening. The sharp response of the Creusot artillery came thinly, at rarer intervals, and from increasing distances; and, with a last gigantic bellow, the enor-

mous siege gun which had squatted nearest them ceased firing.

Instantly a swarm of men poured over and around it—inspecting, cleaning, readjusting various parts, like solicitous stable hands grooming a thoroughbred after an exhausting race.

Finally the last wound was dressed.

Peace settled down over the little clearing.

The German advance had rolled back the Allies, and for some time only the crackle of the wireless came intermittently to the dulled ears of the two Americans, who returned to their hut.

The breeze was sweeping the space around them free from the smoke. Morgan filled his pipe and sat down to a well-earned rest. Healy, who fortunately also still possessed "the makin's," followed his example. They watched a large tent rising a little beyond the wireless station; Von Graf and his staff galloped back and dismounted in front of it. An armored auto rolled up, another group of distinguished-looking officers left the machine. There was an exchange of salutes; a conference under the trees, in which maps, occasional wireless messages, and arriving orderlies all took part.

In the hush of the battle's aftermath, the solitary soldier pacing back and forward in front of the hut brought back to them their own desperate situation. Presently Von Graf and his associates might begin to consider them.

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It mattered nothing that their guardian had seen Morgan alleviate the agony of scores of his countrymen; the soldier was only a cog in the German war machine, and he would answer with his own life for their appearance before their judges.

The prospect, however, was not nearly so threatening as it had been in Luxembourg. On that occasion they had been confronted with a most serious offense—interference with a soldier in the performance of his duty in time of war. Now the charge was theft of an officer's cap.

Such an offense, even if proven, was very trivial in comparison with the other—absurd, in fact. There might be enough in the accusation to enable Von Hollman to detain the two Americans, but there would scarcely be sufficient excuse for summary action by his associates. The other staff officers were concentrating all their knowledge and energy on winning a great war. Von Hollman had certain personal ends in view—he wanted Charlotte Cameron, for one thing, and was determined to have her. It was likely that he would try to induce her to return to the Château des Herthereux. Once this was achieved, Morgan and Healy would likely be allowed to go on to America, especially as Robert Cameron would be rather averse to permitting his niece to expose herself a second time to such hazards if she was once back in Luxembourg.

So Morgan did not take their own position as seriously as he had first regarded it. He even glanced half contemptuously toward the group of officers, now scrutinizing the hut.

Presently a figure detached itself, and, followed respectfully by another, came over in their direction. The sentry stiffened, his heels clicked together, he saluted, and then came to a "present arms."

Count von Hollman paused in the door.

"Good evening, Doctor Morgan," said he, with the easy manner both listeners so well recalled. "It is most regrettable that you are again in military custody. Major von Graf, however, assures me that he had no alternative, under the circumstances, as you had German uniforms concealed in your automobile."

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CHAPTER XVI

THE SENTIMENTALITY OF  
CHARLOTTE

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THE engaging and courteous tone in which the young German general spoke left Fairfax Morgan at a loss for a reply. He had rather anticipated a much more hostile attitude—a stern, uncompromising, and possibly wordless scrutiny. Before he could readjust his chaotic ideas and answer in kind, Von Hollman came in, tapping his leg with the slender cane he carried, walked over, and sat down beside him.

His extended hand rested on Morgan's shoulders in a most friendly fashion.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man," he said. "But you must admit it isn't any of my doing. If you were going to leave Luxembourg, why didn't you tell me, and I would have helped you out."

Morgan looked his bewilderment.

"Would you have helped me out of Luxembourg?" he asked.

He felt that there were many very good rea-

sons why Von Hollman would have done nothing of the kind, but it was hardly the time nor the place to express such sentiments.

"Certainly I would have done so," warmly returned the other man. "Why not? No one has any higher regard for you than I—certainly no one would be more willing to serve Miss Cameron or her uncle, who is an old friend of mine."

Morgan clamped his lips tightly together. He was too astonished to reply. Von Hollman went quietly on:

"Your own distrust of me, and your own headstrong and impetuous way of going about things have brought down upon you all this new trouble. We Germans find ourselves at a loss to know how to deal with you Americans. That is where we are terribly handicapped—you do not understand the German point of view, the necessity that lies behind many inconveniences we are compelled to permit and unable to relieve. Therefore you criticize and distrust the Germans. You Americans are like the English in that respect. England distrusts Germany—otherwise why did she declare war upon us?"

The young physician made a gesture of dissent.

"I am very sorry that I have given you such an impression," he said. "Certainly I had no such intention. You can certainly appreciate the situation which confronted both Miss Cameron and



myself. We never dreamed of the outbreak of war—least of all with such terrible suddenness. I do not see why we should be, even inferentially, suspected of any distrust, because we were trying our best to get to Ostend or any other port we could reach in order to sail for America. If you will pardon my speaking frankly, General, I should say it is you who distrust us—not we you.”

Von Hollman did not appear to take umbrage at the rather pointed way Morgan was turning his own argument into a weapon against him, nor the American accent upon the word “distrust.” He merely waited, polite, inscrutable, and gently administering in his attitude.

“Certainly,” went on the physician, “you must admit that you Germans, engaged in such tremendous military operations, do not desire to be impeded or annoyed by noncombatants. On the contrary, I should imagine you would be glad to see every one of that character safely out of the country—instead of interfering with their departure.”

Von Hollman laughed softly.

“You are nothing but a boy, my dear fellow, like all Americans! Everything that is done must be done your way and without delay. You cannot wait the regular course of events—your hopes, wishes, desires come first. This is serious business, Doctor Morgan. You are not playing tennis now—this is the ‘kriegspiel!’—the war game. The wishes of individuals are of no consequence—

everything must be subordinated to the fixed and unalterable purpose of the Fatherland."

He unostentatiously withdrew his arm, and his tone was colder than before. The air of personal solicitude faded.

Morgan, however, was growing angry. The assumption that he was a child was distinctly irritating. It was the sheerest sophistry—this paternal bosh—and behind it he realized that Von Hollman was inflexibly set on carrying out his purposes with regard to himself and Charlotte.

Goaded more and more by the suave, contained manner of his antagonist, realizing the futility of attempting to fight back under such overwhelming odds, he resented bitterly both the situation and the way in which Von Hollman was maneuvering every circumstance to his own advantage.

"You make me sick with that sort of talk!" He jumped up as he spoke. "Why, if it were not for the interference of your subordinates, we would not be in this country at all. What are you holding us for? If Major von Graf had not stopped us this morning, we might have been sailing for America by this time! The purposes of the Fatherland are nothing to Miss Cameron—nor to my chauffeur, nor me. We are Americans—citizens of a neutral nation. And I would have you remember that we were proceeding peacefully toward the French frontier under the implied protection of the American flag. Why, under such

circumstances, did Von Graf detain us? We had committed no offense!"

"But you have," cut in Von Hollman. "You were carrying disguises—German uniforms—concealed in your automobile."

"There was only one—your own busby," said Morgan. "And an explanation of how it came there was made at the time. But even so, what of it? If a man may be court-martialed by you and your underlings for taking your cap, isn't it just as logical to take him out and shoot him for stealing the cane you were carrying when you came in here?"

Von Hollman rose. He showed neither anger nor embarrassment. He shrugged his shoulders, and his tone was even deprecatory as he replied:

"I can only say, my dear fellow, as I have already said, that I am very sorry. But what has happened has happened. Had you sought my advice, I am quite sure that things would not be in so lamentable a condition."

"You've said all that before," said Morgan, "but you have evaded the point at issue. Whether I sought your advice or not has nothing to do with it. I certainly had no cause whatever to believe you would help me out of Luxembourg—that is too transparent to need any discussion. You were the moving cause of my being brought before that court-martial. You did not intimate to me in any way, after I was found

not guilty, that you thought it a part of your military duty or your personal obligation toward Miss Cameron, her uncle, or myself, to assist us to reach the nearest seaport.

"You have referred to me as a child; you have harped upon my impulsiveness—you have plainly hinted that my personal wishes to return to my own country are of no consequence in view of the military problem Germany faces. All of which, like everything else you have said since coming in here, is beside the issue. The issue is this: Miss Cameron, myself, and chauffeur are Americans. None of us is guilty of any crime. We are detained on a pretext which is self-evidently absurd. Permit me to remind you that none of us has ever made any claim to clairvoyant power. If the offense against us is leaving Luxembourg without asking your aid, the answer is that none of us was a mind reader, and so did not know your burning solicitude for our personal welfare. Now, as an American citizen, I demand my immediate release, and that of my servant."

Von Hollman shook his head.

"There is no reasoning with you, doctor," he said. "But I cannot permit you to go on toward the French frontier after what has occurred. As I said before, it is very serious business."

"If you meant what you said a few minutes ago, there is no reason whatever why we should not be released. You declared that you would

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have done all that lay in your power to aid Miss Cameron and myself to the nearest seaport. What I propose is a test of your sincerity. If you were speaking the truth then, you will do what I ask now—without quibbling. That busby is yours. So was the cloak. And you know as well as I that motoring through these hills at night is chilly business. You have my request—as a citizen of a neutral country. I grant you I cannot compel you to release me—but my own standing and Miss Cameron's make that request not only reasonable but eminently proper. In denying it, you lay yourself open to the suspicion of an ulterior motive—perhaps one unworthy of a German officer."

Von Hollman gently tapped his boot with his cane.

"You Americans!" he softly smiled. "I am very sorry that I am not permitted to do what you demand. There are limitations, much as I regret them, even to my authority. What you ask is impossible."

Morgan had much the feeling of a man driving a rapier into a huge pillow to encounter a sheet of steel behind it. He had played his last card. Von Hollman's silky deference mattered nothing. The significance of things grew upon him. Charlotte had frankly avowed her detestation of this baffling, recondite, but purposeful young man. It was not only his own danger which Morgan must

consider—Charlotte was in more peril than either Healy or himself.

He stifled his anger. Von Hollman was slowly walking toward the door.

“Just a moment,” said Morgan. “I have another request to make of you.”

Von Hollman turned.

“Anything in my power, my dear fellow, I shall be most pleased to allow.”

“Thank you,” dryly returned Morgan. “It is surely within your power, and I do not see how it is possible for it to interfere with the movement of any army corps under your command. I desire to have a little chat with Miss Cameron. Major von Graf specifically stated, at the time we were turned back, that she was not in custody. When may I see her?”

The other seemed taken aback. For the first time he manifested symptoms of uneasiness. Morgan’s clear, challenging eyes made Von Hollman’s waver, then he dropped them. He had been outflanked. There was no reason, such as he had given for Morgan’s detention, which would serve to refuse this direct, simple request. Morgan was a friend of Miss Cameron’s—a very dear friend evidently, for she had left Luxembourg with him. And, as Morgan had so pertinently remarked, Miss Cameron was not in custody—nominally.

The young German grew very thoughtful.

"You do not think Miss Cameron is a spy, do you?" demanded Morgan.

"Why, my dear fellow"—Von Hollman looked up with a sudden smile—"of course not. Certainly you may see Miss Cameron. I will arrange the matter at once."

He turned abruptly and walked through the door, then turned back for a moment.

"I want to thank you, doctor, for the good work you did this afternoon. The chief of the hospital corps says that you are an excellent surgeon. It is a pity we cannot attach you permanently to the German army."

He smiled and stepped quickly back toward the big tent, vanishing in the gloom among the trees. Morgan gazed after him. He could not understand Von Hollman at all. He was not an ordinary man. Ordinary men are not difficult to analyze—this fellow baffled all attempt to comprehend him.

It was almost dusk when Charlotte appeared in the hut where Morgan was confined. Healy had long ago been commandeered to act as a chauffeur for some German officer, and Morgan had been served with a meal of coffee and soup and bread from one of the motor-mounted cook wagons. He had a clear view of the glade about him from the door of the hut. It was evident that the engagement was over, and that the rapid German advance was being continued.

The ambulances with their freight moved northward, but regiment after regiment, foot and field guns moved south. During that afternoon, Morgan saw the passage of an entire army corps with all its transport and ammunition wagons and on a war footing. He saw the big gun dismounted from its platform, set up again on its carriage, and at length move slowly off down the dusty and rutted roads.

Instead of a scene of feverish activity, the place had become an idle backwater in the current of the German advance. The tents were struck and disappeared, the firing rumbled farther and farther away.

Save for the sentry who passed steadily to and fro before the open door, and for the fresh scars left upon forest hillside by the German engineers, the little plateau in the mountains was much as it had been when they had first looked upon it. A hum of insects arose from the weeds by the side of the road, but there was no song of birds as there had been that morning.

Morgan had almost given up hope of seeing her when Charlotte appeared. A noncommissioned officer accompanied her to the door, pointed, saluted, and disappeared. The sentry saluted as she passed him, and Morgan rose to meet her.

As has been said, he had known Charlotte from childhood, and in all that time had known her as kind, warm-hearted, but rather undemonstrative



—certainly not of the clinging type, and never given to displays of emotion.

He was considerably surprised, therefore, when Charlotte, instead of greeting him in her usual fashion, came straight up to him and put both arms around his neck. It was like a dream, but Charlotte's arms were warm and substantial enough. There was something bewilderingly real in the fragrance of her presence, and one stray curl of hers tickled his cheek.

"Charlotte!" he said.

"Don't be silly, or get mushy," whispered Charlotte in his ear, in rapid sibilants. "I don't like this any more than you do, and I'm not going crazy. I want to talk to you, and this is the only way. That sentry at the door can understand English, or Count von Hollman wouldn't have put him there. I want him to think this is a love scene so that he won't be too curious and won't hear what I have to say. Now put your arms about me and walk me over there and we'll sit and hold hands on that sofa."

Morgan did as he was told. A man is never as good an actor as a woman, and Morgan's wish that it wasn't all acting did not make him any better in the part. He had the satisfaction, however, of seeing the sentry move his beat a little farther from the door and avert his head so that they were left in comparative privacy and seclusion. He might be an eavesdropper for military

reasons, but his sentiments were too sound and his heart too soft not to respect such a scene.

"Listen," said Charlotte, still rapidly and in a low tone. "That French aviator, Martin, the man you helped to get off, is near here."

"How do you know?"

"I saw him—and talked to him. I was free to go and come as I pleased. During the battle I climbed up a path up the hill among the trees—I was hoping to get up somewhere where I could get a view of things; there were no soldiers up there—and I came upon him. He frightened me half to death, but he knew who I was and had seen us detained by the Germans. He's been hiding up there since before the Germans came. His machine is up there in a little clearing, and he wants to take me up in it and off to Ostend."

"He can't do it and dodge the Germans," said Morgan.

"Yes, he can." Charlotte emphasized her words by squeezing his hands which she held. "He says the German army is away south now. The rear guard has passed, even. They are moving faster than any army ever moved before. Count von Hollman and a few officers are all that are left behind."

"But you can't get back to him."

"But I can. There's no sentry at my door—no soldiers there at all—just an old lady, and she speaks French, and she likes me. Count von Holl-

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man thinks I'm perfectly safe where I am, and has no idea there's a French aviator in the woods above. I smuggled him some sandwiches this noon. He says he owes his life to you and Healy, and he swears in three languages that he can land me safe in Antwerp if I go with him. He can't take you, but he can take me, and from Antwerp I can get in touch with the secretary of state, and it won't take long to get you out of Count von Hollman's hands. There will be no interrupted cablegrams there."

"I can't have you risking your life in an aeroplane." Morgan drew her toward him, and there was no acting at all now in his attitude of trouble and concern. Charlotte's eyes softened a little.

"Fairfax," she said, "I don't think there's any risk. Martin says not. He's sure there are no air scouts north or east of us."

"The army has gone south," said Morgan, "and I suppose he would be safe enough, as their scouts and aeroplanes are all moving ahead of them—but, Charlotte, it's a risk."

"I'm not afraid to go up in that machine with that Frenchman—but I am afraid here."

"Afraid of what?"

"Afraid of Count von Hollman."

"Surely Von Hollman is a gentleman."

"He may be. But I've heard queer things about gentlemen before now. And really, Fairfax, I think he is crazy. That last automobile ride

in Luxembourg was too terrible. I won't talk about it. I don't think about it when I can help it, but I'm not going to stay an hour longer than I can help in a place where Count von Hollman is absolute master. Don't, Fairfax—don't; please don't lose your temper."

Morgan was gritting his teeth. He rose, took a step or two, sat down beside Charlotte, and caught her outstretched hand once more in his.

"If I killed him——" he said slowly.

"If you killed him, you'd be killed—and I wouldn't have a friend left." Charlotte's voice broke a little. "Oh, dear Fairfax, please let me go with Mr. Martin. I'm not afraid. There's no risk, and it is dangerous for me to stay here. And"—after a little pause, and with a smile breaking through the tears—"if you don't advise me to go, I'm going anyway, without your permission."

"When?"

"To-morrow morning early. Mr. Martin doesn't want to steer by compass. He wants to see his way. He says he's one of the best aviators in the French army."

"And if they fire shells at you?"

"His machine cannot be distinguished at any height from one of the German planes. He's a spy—not a soldier—and it's his business to fool the Germans; and if he's caught, he won't even be shot—he'll be hung, right away."

"So I believe," said Morgan. "He said something of the kind to me."

"And I'm to tell him to-night."

"How are you going to see him?"

"The woman in the house is really a sort of Frenchwoman—a Walloon she calls herself, and speaks some queer sort of old-fashioned French. But she fools the Germans. And she knows Mr. Martin quite well. Mr. Martin knows a lot of people in Belgium. He was here a lot before the war started."

"Yes," said Morgan, "so I understand." He was thinking hard, and the surges of feeling that swept over him at each new glance of Charlotte's eyes, at each new and lovable inflection in her voice, made it hard to think clearly. To the sentry at the door, this couple made a pretty and touching picture of two devoted lovers parted by the stern laws of war. Whatever the ruthless power of the German war machine may bring about, there is still in almost every German heart an unplumbed depth of tender and homely sentiment—the love of a mother for a son, the love of a man for a maid, touched a responsive chord somewhere beneath the gray-green jacket of the pacing sentry. Save for an occasional sidelong glance, he kept his eyes away from the couple and hummed under his breath that Thuringian folksong that we call in English "How Can I Leave Thee?"

To Morgan himself the touch of Charlotte's soft hands in his, her blue and trusting eyes, the soft rise and fall of her bosom—all the intangible things that went up to make the fragrance of her presence were inexpressibly thrilling. To trust such a fair and radiant being to the guardianship of Etienne Martin seemed an awful thing. Martin was brave, of course, to recklessness. But whatever high motives of patriotism were his, he was a spy, and Morgan liked neither the word nor the occupation when he thought of the man as a companion and guardian for Charlotte.

"Fairfax." Charlotte gave his hands a little squeeze, and her eyes seemed tender and luminous in the gathering dusk. "I know just what you are thinking. But it would be worse, much worse, for me to remain here with Count Hollman. I dread him more and more, and however sane he may appear to you, he's crazy—just crazy. And I've talked to Mr. Martin, and, although he's a little excitable, I can trust him, and he's safe. And you don't know how grateful to you he is for saving him that night. It's not on his account alone, he says, but on account of France. And the old woman clasps her hands and weeps when he says it."

"I know," said Morgan. "I've heard him talk."

"Well, I'm going." Charlotte rose and smoothed out her dress. "I know I shall be safe,

and when I get to Ostend it won't be long till you hear from the state department. Say good-by to me, Fairfax, and please, please don't worry."

Her arms were about him, and then he saw the flutter of her skirt in the gathering darkness. She was gone. The door which had been torn off by the Germans had been replaced and stood open. A chill had come on with the night, and Morgan shut the door on the pacing sentry. He lit a candle and looked about the little hut. A cot in one corner, a table and chairs, a fireplace with an iron pot and a picture of the Virgin and child above the mantel—that was all.

Only a few nights ago he had been imprisoned thus in a very different room in Luxembourg. That night he had been in terror of his life—the rope was at his throat. And now he felt that he was safe enough personally—but it was Charlotte's risk that worried him.

That night in Luxembourg had been noisy with the sound of blaring trumpets, the rattle of drums, the tramp of marching feet. Now, this night, as the moon rose, the Ardennes were as silent and peaceful as when Cæsar first passed through them. The battle line had rolled away far to the southward. A few still sentinels, a few white tents under the moon, a scarred hillside where the great gun had been—and silence. And yet on this night, when Morgan blew his candle out and threw himself on the cot, he found it harder to

sleep than on that disturbing night in Luxembourg. It was well toward daybreak that he sprang from his cot, too restless to lie still longer, thinking any action better than none and full of a new resolution.

The hut was built on much the same lines as many a little Adirondack mountain camp. A single room with a door and window was the ground floor. A rickety ladder led to an attic formed by the rough-board ceiling. Morgan's eyes had accustomed themselves to the dark, and it was easy to climb the rickety ladder in his stocking feet without any sound that could possibly have been perceptible to the sentry without.

Once in the attic, Morgan had to crouch on hands and knees to avoid hitting the timbers of the slate roof. At either end of this attic was a window, and from the western one, which was unglazed, a broad shaft of light shone from the setting moon. Morgan approached the other window, which was directly above the door, and looked out. Below, clear of the shadow of the house, stood the single sentry, his bayonet gleaming in the moonlight.

Morgan could see the tents of the staff officers, and the sentries before them. There were only a few; they were well behind the German lines; the Allies were in full retreat far to the south, with the great war machine in pursuit, and there were few soldiers and little danger of a surprise



here. Across the creaky attic floor Morgan moved to the other window. There was no sentry and no tents on this side of the hut; nothing but the wide sweep of the highway, the wooded slopes of the mountain, and the pointed gables of the house to which Charlotte had been taken. The moon was far down in the west. It lacked but a short time of sunrise, and Morgan had taken his resolve. It was too much for him, too unbearable to lie quiescent while Charlotte ventured off into the airy spaces above the hilltops with a reckless Frenchman for a companion, and a hostile army beneath. If his shadow were seen moving in the trees, he knew well that there would be no words, no parley, nothing but the sharp report of a rifle and a bullet through his heart, but it was better to die thus than to lie quiet while Charlotte was in danger. He forced his big bulk through the little, unglazed window, hung for a moment by his hands, and dropped lightly on the soft turf beneath. The serene moonlight added to his disquietude. Perhaps, since it was so light, Martin had started without waiting for the sunrise. He was anxious and impatient, but cautious nevertheless. He must reach the house of the Walloon woman and wait for Charlotte to leave. Then he could accompany her to the spot where Martin had hid his plane, and if there were danger for Charlotte he would be there to share it.

Crisp autumn days of still hunting in the

Maine woods and in the Adirondacks made it seem not at all strange to be slipping through the forest with nothing on his feet but a pair of white woolen socks. All Morgan's physical training, in spite of what Von Hollman had said, had not been of the impractical kind. He slipped from shadow to shadow, watching for the gleam of a bayonet or the dark shadow of a lance amid the trees. As he passed through the woods, he could look down to the road and see a little group of soldiers near the gates of the house that sheltered Charlotte. To the rear of the house the forest was thicker and denser. Once, as he threaded his way through a clump of undergrowth, he was startled by the crash of a partridge as it sprang up among the trees almost from under his feet. Twice he heard the hoot of an owl, and once the long howl of a wolf deep somewhere in the timber, but that was all. The trees grew close down near the little lawn that surrounded the house, and from bole to bole Morgan slipped noiselessly, ever in the shadow. He could see the gleam of moonlight on the windows in the rear of the house, the dark bulk of barn and well house, the sweep of a little orchard, but there was no sentry there, and when Morgan had finished his reconnaissance he was sure.

Within twenty feet of the back door of the house a little path led up among the timber, and near this path, sheltered in a copse of hazel sur-

rounded by sturdy oaks, he crouched and waited. How long he was there he did not know. The shadows cast by the moon grew longer, the moon sank and it was all shadow. Then, after an age-long period of waiting in the darkness, came a soft orange glow above the eastern hills and the twittering of birds from the treetops.

As Morgan half rose and stretched himself, the door of the cottage swung open, and Charlotte appeared, wrapped in a long cloak, and walking quickly up the white path toward him. He was on the point of rising and greeting her when something he saw behind her made him drop back in the shelter of the hazel copse. It was a man's figure, following Charlotte stealthily. A moment later Morgan recognized it. It was no sentinel, but Von Hollman himself, hatless but in the black uniform of the Hussars of Death. He, too, had been watching Charlotte's resting place, and he, too, was rising with the dawn. Could it be possible that he had some knowledge of the near-by presence of Martin, and of Charlotte's plan of escape? And, if so, why had no sentries been posted on the slopes above the house, and why had not Martin been brought into the camp under arrest?

Scarcely breathing, Morgan lay still while Charlotte passed him. An outstretched hand would have touched her garments. He could see the white of her face, the tendrils of her hair, the little hand that held the skirts back from the

briers and bushes. He could hear the soft and hurried intake of her breath.

A moment later Hollman was abreast of him, and one glance at his face was enough to show that it was no official duty that brought him there. His odd countenance was at all times expressive enough, and now there was a sort of madness in it. Eagerness, determination, disappointed but still persistent will were written on those features. The eyes were fixed on Charlotte's dark form as it sped up the hill, but his booted feet without spurs kept the path well enough and noiselessly. His arms were outstretched before him. If ever a figure expressed set purpose, desire, determination carried to the length of madness, it was Von Hollman's. The pale-gray light showed him plainly enough, and now that he thought himself all unobserved his emotions were written for any one to see on his face. A sense of repulsion, and then an odd throb of pity stirred Morgan. There was something pathetic in such a man, with such gifts, absolutely carried away and dominated by such a reckless and desperate passion. Morgan once at Bellevue had tried to save the life of a man who had shot a girl and then himself because she refused to marry him; and now Von Hollman seemed such a man and capable of such insanity. He followed him at a distance of ten paces or so, hiding behind the tree boles and moving noiselessly on his stockinged feet. He might have

cracked a thousand twigs without causing that dark figure to turn. At that moment there was only one thing in the world for Von Hollman, and that was Charlotte Cameron.

Thus moving, the three climbed higher and higher up the wooded slopes, and presently a clearing, recently made, was visible with the shadowy form of Martin's machine in the middle of it, the figure of Martin beside it, and empty gasoline cans scattered about. Martin, in his work of Belgian espionage, had evidently been using this roost in the hills and adapting it to his purpose for some time before the war broke out.

As they reached the clearing, Von Hollman paused in astonishment and straightened up. The clearing, the aeroplane were evidently a great surprise to him, and he halted. At the same instant, Martin, who had dashed forward to meet Charlotte, was helping her into the machine, and almost at the same second the sputter of its exhaust broke the silence.

Morgan was close behind Von Hollman now. The count was a tense, crouching figure, one hand at his belt. Presently the hand swung up, and in it was a black automatic pointed at Martin. It was at this second that Morgan struck, and before he could fire Von Hollman fell heavily and Morgan threw his weight upon him. He did not look up, but he heard the roar of the exhaust, the whirr of its flight, and knew that the monoplane was

passing above him, westward and to safety. And he himself was struggling with a madman. Twice and three times he struck at Hollman, but the blows took no effect. Again and again he tried to twist the pistol from Von Hollman's grasp, but the fingers seemed made of steel, and Von Hollman himself a thing of wire and steel springs. They rolled over and over on the grass. Then there was the barking report of the automatic, and Morgan fell limp. Von Hollman stood up, panting, looking down at the face of the doctor. A stream of blood ran across his forehead from a wound some place beneath his thick, blond hair. There was a sound of rushing feet, and soldiers appeared among the trees with fixed bayonets.

"Swine!" said Von Hollman, panting heavily and speaking in German. "You have allowed one prisoner to escape, but I have caught the other. Carry him to my tent."

An officer appeared and pointed in the direction the plane had taken. Von Hollman shook his head.

"You cannot fire at it," he said. "There is a lady in it—a German princess. We have been outwitted by a Frenchman and a fool of an American."

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## CHAPTER XVII

### THE AEROPLANE

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**T**OALLY unaware of the struggle so close to them, Charlotte and Martin had made their start. The motor had spun over; in another instant it was chattering in subdued fashion. The compact yet slender Deperdussin monoplane obeyed its pilot's volition as if it could think and feel. It was equipped with the most modern devices. Starting from the aviator's seat without assistance and muffling the exhaust until well aloft were distinct advantages in the enemy's territory—a hint of the thorough preparation of the great allied powers opposing the German advance.

The propeller vanished, save for a dark blur at its hub; the slender fuselage rose from its skid, hanging, suspended and quivering, in the terrific air draft caused by its revolutions. Then, oddly like a swift-footed marsh bird on attenuated legs, it darted across a few feet of the open space. With a hardly perceptible but saucy flip of the

tail, it rose with such superlative steadiness and grace that the sense of speed it had already attained was lost.

At a steady incline it topped the trees ahead, banked sharply, flashing its neutral wings to the kiss of the morning sun. A flock of sparrows rose, chattering, from the boughs over which it passed and fled in fear to the deeper thickets. Von Hollman's shot and the sound of the struggle were drowned in the noise of the engine as it gathered power. Another turn and the muffled exhaust was already so faint as to be almost indiscernible, while the machine itself had become merely the size of a crow, pointing into the serene sky, bearing with it the hopes and fears of the watcher's soul.

Charlotte Cameron, the instant the Deperdussin monoplane took the air, engulfed in a whirlpool of inconceivably new sensations, by one of those strange, psychic reversions that no theory will satisfactorily explain, promptly forgot the hazard of her position and then the fact herself.

Instead, for an instant, into which was crowded the apparent period of time which the original events had occupied, she was again in the peaceful Château des Herthereux, watching the characteristic assurance of Count Otto von Hollman, as he brewed the "Waldmeister" bowl the afternoon of Fairfax Morgan's arrival.

Then there was an odd flutter in her breast, and



Charlotte Cameron was conscious that she was sweeping upward, the world was physically falling from beneath her as everything had fallen apart that autumnal afternoon.

She was afloat over a huge concave eyeball—the earth was turning inside out—and she was hovering over its dished center, though rising steadily to the diapason of a trumpeting behemoth whose protests at a double load drowned every other sound. Martin had cut out the muffler.

As realization drove fanciful imaginings from her vision, there yet persisted the memory of Von Hollman's attitude that day. Even here in the swift sublimation of the thundering motor whose nostrils emitted oily gases that trailed behind them in a nebulous stream, and despite the confident shoulders of Etienne Martin immediately ahead of her, the girl could feel the mysterious force of the German officer, fighting against this genie of science—striving to drag her back to the planet still softly falling into the fathomless abyss below.

She looked down.

Already at the height of half a mile, the only way to distinguish between the blotches of woodland and the grass was that the open spaces were lighter in hue. The fields were shrunk to the size of checkerboards, and the roads between them were like thin, brown threads. Little ponds threw

back the light into her eyes, as if they were sheets of glass; a railroad resembled two piano wires stretched along the ground. Farm buildings were quaintly foreshortened. They looked like children's toys strewn carelessly over the landscape.

They thundered over the Meuse, a silver thread winding erratically among the lumps that had once been hills. Then they ceased to incline upward, and the fuselage, in which she reclined as luxuriously as in a costly roadster, lifted to an even keel.

Puffs of vapor far, far ahead, toward which they were traveling, popped up and spread themselves out in the refulgent air below. A brownish haze seemed to cumber the horizon, broken now and then by some upheaval beneath which subsided gradually.

Charlotte lifted the binoculars which Martin had hung around her neck, and looked down again fearlessly. Behind the vapor she could distinguish dark motes, from which occasionally flashed minute lights, like the signal of fireflies on a summer night.

As they drew nearer to the great pall which spread out so far as she could see, the powerful lenses gradually revealed the ponderous artillery in more normal aspects, and the deep, far-away booming, like that which she had heard at Luxembourg, floated up more and more audibly.

At last the watcher was peering down upon

the cannon. They were slanted skyward, but slightly forward—spitting fire and smoke with a regularity that was almost monotonous—apparently aiming at nothing in particular. The whole performance was on a par with the incredible stupidity of the war itself—the sudden brawl of several blind giants in a room, each striking frantically at each other, intent only on dealing his antagonist a fatal injury by sheer chance.

The clamor of the mighty siege guns far, far below them now came more clearly, combating insistently the throaty blasts of the motor as if saying “*I will be heard.*”

There was a sudden lift to the machine. It darted upward and sidewise, like a horse “shying” at something it fears, followed by a headlong, sickening plunge downward into the airhole left by the shell’s unseen passage below them. The monoplane shivered, as if in fear of the imminence of the peril that had just passed, and every wire on it hummed like an Æolian harp.

They dived so steeply that Charlotte could peer over Martin’s head at the ground below them, and her first throb of sickening fear was followed by the frightful thought that they were out of control. Still gazing through the glass which she unconsciously clutched, little groups of insects, spread out in thin, opposing lines, were now more clearly perceived. They were industrious little insects, it appeared. Some would

rise, rush forward, drop to the ground, accompanied sometimes by quite considerable puffing of still smaller apparatus. The other insects at which these puffs were directed sometimes curled up, or pitched forward and remained prone—not to move again. As they dropped lower and lower, the ludicrous aspect of things gave way to a more vivid and sinister one.

They were volleying onward again, still to the west, but in a slightly different course.

When next she peered down, the first line of insects had been left far, far behind; but another and no less determined contest was continuing beneath them—the grapple, as she could plainly see, of monstrous masses of infantry, artillery, and cavalry—charging and countercharging behind bits of brilliant coloring, battle flags which always somehow managed to keep an erect position, no matter how many of the maddened men around it went down never to rise again.

She focused her glasses on a great battery of field guns in the line on the right. From the uniforms she judged the men must be Germans, perhaps part of some of the very divisions she had seen advancing through Belgium. Then the knot of guns lifted. The men who had been manning them tossed upward, sidewise, or seemed to try to dive through the earth. As they sped directly over the place where the battery had been, the dust drifted away, revealing a great gash in the

earth. Shapeless masses were huddled here and there, and Charlotte Cameron knew that the invisible about her was being peopled by the life essence of these men. Their souls were hurtling out into the Great Mystery.

They were sliding softly to the south, the monoplane turning on its invisible pivot—the center of gravity. The wing on her right rose sharply, and it was more convenient for her to look over the lower edge—on the opposite side.

Above the chattering motor, to which her ears were now partially accustomed, the girl could distinguish something that recalled the “long roll” as interpreted on a huge army drum by a veteran who had lived next door to her own home when she was a Dresden doll-child, with yellow braids. The roll intensified as the machine steadied to an even keel. It was heavy and sustained rifle fire.

Then, as a bird charmed by the serpent returns to its fatal hypnosis, so Charlotte Cameron swept the field beneath with the powerful glass. She could see the men more clearly now, although they were flitting like phantoms on a moving-picture screen, whose operator insists on triple speed of the crank handle. The men were frantically shoving the cartridges into their rifles; now and again one would crumple up inertly or collapse, writhing.

There was dulled sound, like the beating of

wings of a swarm of bats in some great cave. They were over a cavalry charge against a battery—at the extreme end of another of the quaint, irregular masses of men they had long been hovering above.

Frantic horses fell with sharp screams that shrilled above the now monotonous sound of the faithful motor; sabers flashed. The vision of slaughter faded, and the calm, restful sea of waving branches and trunks of trees that seemed sacred in their calmness leaped into the girl's field of vision.

They sped madly over a huddle of tiled roofs, with open-mouthed people staring stupidly at them for a fascinated instant, then they fled into their shells of dwellings—fear driving them.

Rising again abruptly, but steadily, they swept in a wide circle, and the sun shifted around as if to meet and challenge them for their presumption in daring to intrude into his domain of the impalpable. The struggle below grew squalid and petty—for all its concentrated ghastliness.

Quite without any warning of its nearness, another object bulked across their sight. Simultaneously, Etienne Martin turned. There was a whining drone alongside—another and another. As the glare died from the glass which Charlotte dropped inertly after unconsciously receiving the full beams of the sun into her eyes, she descried a silvery, opaque something, like themselves, far

above the zone of tidal death flowing on the earth's surface.

It resembled a glass bowl, like those adorning parlor tables, in which goldfish swim. The bowl darted past them and scattered itself into chaotic fragments far below.

Martin turned. His features were distorted, but why she could not imagine. Charlotte felt, however, from his bared teeth and tense expression, that the pilot had suddenly met with unexpected difficulties. A shell had missed them narrowly.

It was another confusing event, so many of which had already charged upon her bewildered consciousness. Then the air churned up through her nostrils as the pilot of the Deperdussin dove, headforemost, and with utter recklessness, toward the ground.

They "flattened out," rose in a swift spiral, and then dropped earthward again. At the next rise Charlotte fancied the droning seemed more spiteful and frequent.

Again they dove, swayed, whirled, spiraled aloft. In a vagrant instant, during which the girl thought they would certainly turn completely over, so sharply did Martin "bank" the monoplane, her gaze was almost perpendicularly down upon a great city.

But why was Martin exhibiting such strange eccentricities? Surely there was something un-

usual about the manner of their descent—they were fluttering hither and yon, like a confused bird, which hesitates to land.

An enormously tall chimney far ahead flung its bricks in a terrorizing shower far and wide, an instant after another of those increasingly near droning whines passed Charlotte's ears.

A sudden and more deafening detonation smothered all other sounds. A sheet of flame leaped up from a splendid spire over which they were darting—lapping eagerly at the space between the frail web of ash and varnished linen on which two human beings were scuttling dangerously near the roofs of the city, but as Charlotte thankfully perceived, once more on a level keel. So far, the shells had missed them.

Her face burned; she was growing dizzy. Black spots floated before her eyes, and there was a ringing in her ears. This she relieved by swallowing. Her thoughts were no longer of what was happening. She was growing so weak that her fingers forgot to clutch the glass. It dangled at the end of the leather loop around her neck, swaying with the motion of the machine.

The swift transition from the clarified atmosphere above to the heavier pressures below was bringing the reaction all aviators know and dread. The air through which she had been speeding at first had been wonderfully limpid and clear. The swift motion of the machine, forcing it in un-



usual quantities into her lungs, had prevented her from experiencing the usual symptoms of "mountain sickness"; besides, she had not been compelled to exert herself physically.

The headlong rush downward with its violent alterations of pressure, the hideous, numbing fear which it entailed, and, above all, the sense of insecurity which comes with realizing that every faculty is powerless, were overpowering her.

The torpor now stealing over her objective faculties was not a fainting spell—Charlotte was still able to think a little. In a way, the hypnosis was merciful. It blinded her to a knowledge of the desolation of the burning, collapsing city beneath her whose cathedrals, public buildings, residences, and places of business were being scientifically demolished by the terrible shells of the Germans; it closed her ears to the cries of the earthbound wretches who were trapped by their onslaught.

The straps which Martin had fastened about her before the start held her like the arms of some watchful nurse; the blasts from the still faithful motor, although now and again punctuated by an abrupt choke, as if this insensate bit of machinery was also tiring after its prodigious efforts, faded out.

She was back again in the Château des Hertheux; her uncle was smiling at her; Morgan's

car was coming up the drive; his eager, manly face was very good to see.

Etienne Martin, wondering how long the gas would suffice to carry them, twisted his head to look at his passenger as the doomed city dropped behind.

Charlotte seemed sleeping.

He would gladly have descended had he dared. But the German army, which he had counted on finding at most perhaps twenty miles from where it had been two days before, was thrice that distance. Confronting it, in brigade after brigade, horse, foot, artillery, were the armies of the Allies.

All Martin had so far done was nothing gained, and he must fly on and on as long as the petrol lasted. There had been none too much petrol at the start. The effort of climbing with an extra person to a reasonably safe elevation had sadly depleted Martin's tanks at the outset. The unexpected distance to the French army had alarmed him. It was because of this that he had attempted to conserve his scant supply by a long vol-plane.

The mad rush down had carried him directly over the brow of a chain of hills and into the very thing he had been so sedulously endeavoring to avoid—the zone of artillery fire. It was unthinkable, except for the shells, that the Germans had penetrated so far. These enemies of his beloved

France were only human beings—they must eat and sleep.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding which, the shells which he had so narrowly escaped proved they were already many miles across the frontier. Even the city they had just passed had been unprepared, stupefied, defenseless.

To get out of such a terrible ambushade in the air had necessitated more demands upon his precious petrol. The occasional warning note of the engine signified that he was now nearing the last ounce of supply. Already the air was being drawn through the feed pipe and the mixture was almost too thin to keep the machine aloft.

Martin gently turned the nose of his machine downward, and scanned the panorama below him with troubled eyes.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### BEHIND THE FRENCH LINES

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**B**ELOW the now rapidly descending monoplane, as its thankful pilot was soon able to discern, the actual ruin and wrack of relentless conflict had not yet left its mark. As in the air there are no landmarks, and the aviator flying at great heights must rely largely on maps and compass for even a general knowledge of his whereabouts, so Etienne Martin was unable to recognize the precise place into which he was dropping in enormous circles.

He thanked his stars that his machine was the most modern of types, taut, true, and steady. The terrific vibration of their long-continued journey had not caused even a vagrant turnbuckle to loosen, nor a weakened wire to give way.

"*Bon enfant!*" exclaimed the doughty fellow approvingly to the machine, as he cut out the engine, and, relying solely upon the gliding angle of the wings for the balance of the volplane, turned the earth into a propeller by still further

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inclining the nose of the Deperdussin toward it. Theoretically, the gliding angle was "one in twelve"—that is, for each foot of space downward he could travel twelve in distance. But a stiff breeze was encountered a few hundred feet from the ground, compelling him to head into it to make sure of a safe landing when the wheels struck earth. Otherwise a gust from behind might tip the tail until they landed upside down. Besides, with the additional weight of Charlotte Cameron, theory and its percentages required considerable modification of his usual daring methods in actually landing.

"*Mon Dieu!*" gasped Martin, half in reverence and half in fear, as, half a minute later, he sped across the bit of swampy ground now under them, and lifted the machine, in a last desperate endeavor to reach the firm, white road, much as a steeplechase rider sends his wearied mount against the final barrier of the course. He made it, but with not a foot to spare.

"*Tenez!*" echoed a voice just beneath him, the speaker at the same instant rising from a bit of brush and covering him with a rifle. A shot rang out, but the franc-tireur who had so summarily challenged him miscalculated the speed of the machine, and the bullet sped harmlessly past him.

The next instant the Deperdussin was rippling along the dust of the road, its tail skidding sideways. With the propeller draft no longer drift-

ing back on the small rudder, control was very difficult. Martin was out of his seat and back at Miss Cameron's side before the dust clouds drifted to the side of the road.

"Are you hurt?" he solicitously inquired.

"Not at all," faintly replied Charlotte, "but I'm awfully glad that we're back on the ground again."

"Keep your eyes closed for a few minutes," returned the pilot, "and then you will be less likely to be giddy. We must thank the good God for our preservation. I thought we were surely gone when that masked battery opened on us near the city."

He dropped his hand carelessly on his jacket pocket as the fellow with the rifle came importantly across the marsh.

"You should be more careful, *mon ami*," chided Martin gently, "at whom you fire. A machine about to land is probably a friend. At least you may be more sure of its occupants when they are on the same earth with you. Remember that hereafter. Where is the nearest division chief?"

"Who are you?" sullenly returned the man, eying him suspiciously.

"A servant of France, on special detail," said Martin. "Come, come, my fine fellow; do not assume airs to which you are not suited. Where is the nearest division chief?"

"There are troops at Le Catelet."

"*Bien!*" Martin's face glowed with pleasure. He turned toward Charlotte. "If I only had some smelling salts, mademoiselle, I would know what to do with them. As it is, I may only say that we are perhaps thirty miles beyond the frontier, although not exactly where I had hoped to be. When you are able to stand, we will go on to the cottage over yonder, and from there to the city."

Charlotte was more upset than she wanted to admit, even to herself. For one thing, she found it very hard to accommodate her eyes to the inertia of the ground. It seemed to want to race past—even the sedate trees displayed an impish impulse to run toward her, as if the blasts of the cannon she had heard were a signal for their release.

She leaned on Martin's arm, after he had pushed the machine out alongside the road, and watched him fling a coin to the still moody franc-tireur.

It was of gold, and the man pounced greedily upon it as if his disappointment at not discovering a German spy in the machine were partially assuaged.

"There is more where that came from," said Martin lightly. "If I find the machine unharmed when I return again, it shall be yours. If not —"

He paused significantly.

Charlotte Cameron, despite her "all-gone" feeling, realized that the snapping eyes of the little pilot held a menace that it would not be wise to ignore.

"As you see," said Martin, still addressing the man, "it has the official stamp of the war department. Let that be enough for you."

They walked on a few steps, Charlotte lagging in spite of herself.

The fragrant breath of the piny woods bordering the road, the upturned faces of the flowers, the moss-covered rocks in the neat wall, and the little hill up which they were plodding, were all the same, yet somehow different. It was not alone the suspense of their wild ride on the magical thing or the tremendous heights to which they had climbed, nor yet the perilous gyrations which the pilot had been forced to assume to maneuver his craft safely past the masked battery bombarding the city.

It was all of this, and more.

The girl had a feeling that the world would never be quite the same again; that the fearful spectacle of the battle would return unsummoned in the years to come, and that it could never be quite blotted out. Almost she wished she had been content to remain within the comparative peace of the German rear guard. Even Von Hollman's insistence, detestable as it had seemed, was



not to be compared to this greater horror she had witnessed.

She was crying gently as they reached the top. The anger-lashed atoms of men and youths dealing death and receiving it with no thought of anything save blind obedience to orders from others, all these had mothers, sweethearts, children who loved them.

Martin displayed more delicacy than one would have suspected a mere spy to possess. He did not appear to see her grief, and wisely refrained from any attempt at solace. Near the top of the hill he urged her to rest, and brought water from a spring in the gourd hanging by it.

"A few steps more, and we shall be with friends who will care for you," said he.

Charlotte drank thankfully, then laved her face and hands.

"I cannot tell you how much I owe to your skill and courage," said she, as they went on toward the house. "It was something for which I was hardly prepared. The flight alone would have made me squeamish. It seems incredible that we were actually so far above the ground and got back safely."

Martin's smile showed he appreciated the compliment. He was the same assured, alert, nervy chap he was when entering the machine.

"I only wish we might have brought Doctor Morgan with us," said he. "But that, of course,

was impossible. However, with you over here, that German will not dare to be too harsh with him."

They entered the gate leading to the house.

Bees were darting to and from the hives, carrying with them the last nectar of the year from the blossoms along the edges of the neatly tilled fields. From the rear came a homely but under the circumstances a most delightful and reassuring sound—the rhythm of a dasher in a churn.

"*Voilà!*" exclaimed the buxom young matron, as they came around the house.

Martin quickly explained the reason for their presence, and the woman's eyes widened.

"You came over the battle line?"

Her look of astonishment drowned her native courtesy. Charlotte swayed a little, and Martin hastily set a chair for her.

"A glass of wine!" he snapped. "Mademoiselle is suffering. Do you not see?"

With a quick apology, the matron ran into the house. Charlotte needed no urging. The weakness which she had felt on reaching the ground was still upon her.

"Thanks, I will be glad to pay for it," said she.

"Pay? Oh, mademoiselle, surely you do not think that we of Le Catelet are like to the people of Paris! I have heard of their selfish ways. No, indeed, both you and this soldier are most wel-

come to all that we have. Tell me, are the uhlands really coming?"

The apprehension in her sudden query amused Martin.

"Oh, yes, they are headed this way," said he, with mock gravity; "but some little entertainment which they are unable to resist is being tendered them. I have an idea that they may not get over this far to-day. They seemed very much occupied as we passed them."

With the deft smoothness which he could display when called upon to shift to other subjects, Martin quickly arranged that the woman's husband should take them both into the city.

Meanwhile, they sat down to an *al fresco* lunch—a bit of cold fowl, some salad, thick slices of bread, and *vin ordinaire*. Charlotte nibbled, but Martin ate with gusto.

"I may eat again, and then I may go hungry—or worse," said he, with a little grimace, rising from the table. "These be busy days for us of the air corps. Now, mademoiselle, if you will be so kind as to enter the carriage——"

Le Catelet was buzzing with excitement when they reached the town. At the Convent of Our Lady of Emden, Martin took leave of Miss Cameron.

"Here you will be cared for until you feel able to resume your journey," said he, holding out his hand in farewell, as the Sister Superior made

Charlotte welcome. "It is not at all likely that the Germans will ever get this far. Anyway, before they do, you will be at Paris, or, if you prefer, and as may perhaps be the better plan, you will go on toward Calais. I will report to the commander here my own arrival and yours. After he has registered you, your passports will receive a military visé when you are ready to leave. Au revoir!"

With a cheery smile and a respectful bow to the Sister Superior, Martin was swinging down the road, whistling as blithely as the birds piping their matins in the Château des Herthereux before the boom of the caterpillar siege guns drifted down the wind from Liège.

Charlotte was very downhearted as he left. He was the last tie that bound her to Fairfax Morgan, gallant American and ideal lover that he was. Her thoughts rushed back to the final meeting with him in the forest near Givet. Von Hollman was not a man to overlook a grievance, and Morgan's pertinacity would be likely to result gravely, unless, as Martin had hinted, the German commander would be chary of incurring the displeasure of the United States.

She wanted very much to telegraph to the authorities at Washington without delay and request them to reassure her uncle at Luxembourg, through Berlin, not only of her own safety, but of the peril which yet hung over Morgan and Healy.

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## HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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She started to rise from her chair.

But the weakness which still clung to her was so obvious that the Mother Superior gently bade her resume it.

"We will prepare a room for you, my child," said she, "and then you must rest. You will be better for it. The war, it is a terrible thing, is it not? How we have prayed that it might not overshadow the nations!"

There was a pathos in her simple words that touched Charlotte deeply. She suffered herself to be led away and disrobed by the gentle hands of the ministering sisters. Then, with one of them within call, she faded away into an uneasy and troubled slumber.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### IN WHICH MORGAN RECOVERS FROM HIS WOUND

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AS another of the interminable lines of smoke-gray uniformed men on horses came into view, Fairfax Morgan was more inclined to smile than he had been for some time. It was not at those perfectly disciplined animals, however, although men and horses seemed a unit as they passed. It was rather at the caprice of events which had persisted in preventing him from reaching the other armies.

Charlotte Cameron was gone, and he tried to persuade himself that she was safe, while his eyes studied the spiked helmets, the gray uniforms contrasting with the black or bay horses, and the polished weapons. They seemed a sinister echo of the words: "You see, after all, you Americans and English are mere barbarians—toying with life. While you played tennis and baseball, we forged guns and swords."

While the sight was no longer novel, it never

grew tame nor lacking in a certain fascination. Perhaps it was the grim sureness of these prepared men; their silence. They never looked toward him as they filed by, riding as stiffly as on parade. They were going to death and wounds, perhaps to prisons, but it was very evident that none of them expected anything but victory. Apprehension was never in their thoughts, to judge from their countenances, and Morgan had seen many thousands of men like these in the three weeks which had passed since Charlotte's flight in the aeroplane.

It was hard, at times, to believe that Germany had so many tens of thousands of miraculously ready men. Always they were passing him—artillery, infantry, cavalry—cavalry, artillery, infantry. After a time the real meaning of Von Hollman's inscrutable smile began to dawn on Morgan. It must, indeed, have been mightily amusing to the young brigadier general to watch one lone American flinging himself against this barrier of blood and iron.

The wound on Morgan's head had almost entirely healed. He no longer wore the bandage. There was just enough irritation remaining to remind him of Von Hollman's look of baffled passion the morning Charlotte had clambered into Martin's monoplane. The discharge of Von Hollman's pistol, whether by accident or design Morgan neither knew nor cared, had "creased"

his head in such a way that he lost consciousness. Of what afterward happened he had not the slightest inkling, save that when he regained his senses his head was bandaged and he was between two soldiers in a machine, following the hordes of men in gray on marches that seemed endless.

Although his profession had made him familiar with the ability of the human body to bear up under fatigue or disease, the endurance of the German army, particularly of the infantry, was amazing. During the long, weary marches over dusty roads, sometimes fighting in desultory skirmishes or in clashes which took heavy toll of dead and wounded, their automatic obedience never grew lax. They would stand erect when their lines again reformed; the sibilant rattle of voices answered briskly the "*ein, zwei, drei, vier,*" of the roll call; their battle-stained weapons were always clean at inspection time. Only when the order of dismissal rang out did they evidence the physical exhaustion which such prodigious exertions entailed.

Morgan could not understand why they had been detouring so far to the north, nor why they were now in Mons, as the street signs showed when he had been taken to the house. Again and again he asked himself why he was still alive. Von Hollman was in supreme authority of this division. There were plenty of men who would have been glad to exchange places with the pris-



oner, if only to be as well sheltered and fed. He realized that his position was very grave—far more desperate than in Luxembourg. But of Von Hollman, since that morning when they had grappled like lion and tiger, there had been no sign—nor even of Von Graf.

There were two sentinels always with him. Grim, taciturn men they were. They rendered the likelihood of another escape so utterly absurd that Morgan never even thought of it. At regular intervals they were relieved by two others—tall, stalwart men—Prussians, he judged.

Although Healy's absence made him very lonely, Morgan sincerely hoped the doughty little chauffeur was well and safe. He had simply dropped out of sight and ken. Perhaps Von Hollman thought in this way to further break Morgan's obstinacy regarding returning to America alone. If so, the young physician told himself, the arrogant German had failed of his purpose. Single-handed and alone, he had helped Charlotte to escape, and all but mastered his rival. The little affair on the lawn of the Château des Herthereux was avenged, and amply.

The chill of coming autumn was in the air; trees flamed scarlet and gold, or grew gaunter day by day as the frost stripped them. The birds were migrating to the south; squirrels were scuttling anxiously here and there over the trim lawn before the house in which he was sitting;

there was more of peace in the air than there had been of late. He had plenty of time to observe and reflect, but he wished that he could get things over with somehow.

At this moment, as if in answer to his thoughts, Von Hollman's armored car drew up at the palings of the fence and the count swung to the ground. Although Morgan expected the worst since regaining consciousness, as Von Hollman came quickly up the gravel path the prisoner was almost glad. The worst would be better than the uncertainty of the past week.

"How is your head to-day, doctor?" asked Von Hollman, after an exchange of salutations. From his casual but kindly tone, one would have surmised that he came quite regularly.

"Oh, I guess it's good enough to shoot at again," returned Morgan. "If that's what you've been waiting for, pray proceed."

"I don't understand you," said Von Hollman. "The wound was an accident. You must realize that. When you bent back my arms, the flexing of the muscles was quite involuntary on my part. Surely your knowledge of anatomy makes it plain that my finger pressed the trigger altogether without intention."

Morgan shrugged his shoulders and laughed.

"I had no time to think of anatomy then," he said. "I had too big a job on hand, as it was. For one thing, I can't be sufficiently sure, after

what has happened, to deny that you are right. But what of it? Isn't it ancient history? And in what way is it relevant to my present condition? I am, as you perceive, still very much in custody."

Von Hollman nodded good-humoredly. It was hard to believe that this easy-going person was the half-insane man who had pursued Charlotte early that morning in the Ardennes.

"You seem to regard it as if it were a very commonplace matter," said Morgan. "Why don't you go ahead with the rest of it? I'm ready. I've beaten you. You got me, but you didn't get Charlotte. Why not go through with the rest of the farce?"

"The rest of the farce?"

"The court-martial."

"There will be no court-martial, for the present. Your assault upon me is a personal matter—not a military offense."

Morgan was taken slightly aback. Such an idea had never before occurred to him. He waited for Von Hollman to continue.

"Between gentlemen, Doctor Morgan, there is, even in times of military necessity, a code which I have never yet violated. You struck me—do you remember?"

"I think I did. Why?"

"Then, of course, you will have no objections to according me the satisfaction one gentleman

gives to another under such circumstances," said Von Hollman more rapidly and in tones whose brittle quality showed he regarded the matter as already determined.

"You mean you want to fight a duel with me?"

"You divine my meaning perfectly."

Morgan dropped into a chair and laughed derisively. Von Hollman frowned.

"Who's acting childish now?" demanded the American. "I beat you up—or tried to—simply because I didn't want that aviator shot before he could get Miss Cameron away. Why should I fight a duel with you? Why, it's absurd. I wouldn't fight a duel with any man. I may be an American barbarian, but I'm not a murderer. If I'm to be shot, I rather prefer this 'military necessity' which you have mentioned once or twice as an explanation for my past treatment."

Von Hollman flushed.

"There will be no court-martial, for the present," he repeated, ignoring Morgan's reply. "As I have said, your attack upon me was a personal matter. Owing to what happened previously, I am, of course, compelled for military reasons to still detain you. The delay is because I wanted to make sure that you had entirely recovered before sending you back to Spandau. You will be locked up there until the authorities can decide what shall be done with you."

"Locked up in Spandau?" Morgan had heard

of that Prussian bastille where political prisoners are held.

"I do not see how we may avoid it, doctor. We cannot be dragging you along with the army indefinitely, you know. We need every man for fighting. It takes four to guard you."

"You certainly have my permission to withdraw them, general. I did not request their services. How far is it to Spandau?"

"Quite some distance. We are sending all the political prisoners there. The ordinary chaps we put at work in the fields to replace our own men who are with their regiments. Some, under guard, of course, we put digging trenches, helping bury the dead, and work of that kind."

"I don't blame them for choosing work instead of being locked up," said Morgan. "But what have I done to go to Spandau? I'm not a prisoner in the sense these captured soldiers are. And, as you have just said, the affair between us is a personal one. Do you visit your vengeance on your personal enemies in this official fashion? Spandau, I infer, is the military prison?"

Although he had not the slightest hope of any consideration at Von Hollman's hands, Morgan nevertheless felt a certain satisfaction in thus pinning the German with his own words. After the long, silent weeks, it was good to talk, even if he could expect no relief.

Von Hollman sat stiffly, staring straight ahead

with his dark eyes looking through Morgan and beyond him. It was impossible to say of what he was thinking. His prisoner turned indifferently toward the window. He had done everything he could do. He had drawn the admission that he would not be court-martialed; he had refused Von Hollman "satisfaction" on "the field of honor"; now he was resigned. The idea of imprisonment was disquieting, but it might not be prolonged, particularly if Charlotte had landed behind the French lines in safety. Charlotte was most sensible, and Morgan knew she loved him dearly. Once Charlotte arrived at a seaport, the United States government would be notified of Morgan's plight and Germany could ill afford increasing the number of its foes. Morgan turned to look again at Von Hollman.

"Doctor," began the German suddenly, "you have twice aided the enemy."

"Pardon me," brusquely returned Morgan, "that has not yet been proven. I have twice been accused. I have once been acquitted—and now you propose to lock me up without a court-martial. Let's stop pretending. You have a personal grievance against me. I refuse to fight you because, while I am a young American barbarian, I don't believe in dueling. As an alternative you propose to lock me up. Go ahead! Lock me up! I've got no kick coming. When do I start for Spandau?"

This time the speaker was a little less certain that the shell of his hearer's self-complacency was not pierced. Von Hollman, for all his faults and personal eccentricities, was still an aristocrat, with the aristocrat's code. Without entirely comprehending why it was so, Morgan felt that he had suddenly stumbled upon the weakest point in this arbitrary fellow's armor. It was unthinkable—as Von Hollman's expression so eloquently showed—that he should be sent to Spandau to satisfy a private quarrel between gentlemen.

And, after all was said and done, it was almost equally unthinkable that an American tourist, an admitted neutral, should be stood up before a firing squad for stealing Von Hollman's busby. As the first auspicious surmises deepened into certainty, Morgan asked himself what Von Hollman would do.

"There is something to your words—not particularly because of their logic, but more because of your point of view," said Von Hollman at last, speaking slowly. "That is what makes my position so hard. Were I merely the commander of an army corps, I could, perhaps, go on with your court-martial. After what has happened, don't you see that is impossible?"

"Oh, never mind my feelings," scoffed Morgan, following up his advantage. "Anything is preferable to uncertainty. Go on with your court-martial. Are you afraid they will acquit me?"

- That would be most embarrassing to your plans. I would be free to go to America as Miss Cameron did, in that event, and you would have to hunt up a fresh pretext for detaining me. Therefore you invoke this 'personal-satisfaction' theory as a reason for sending me to a military prison. I have a very clear idea of the whole situation, general. Perhaps, as you admit, our points of view differ. If I were in command of an army corps, I am quite sure what my decision would be."

"Your second offense of aiding the enemy was not the theft of my busby," said Von Hollman irritably. "You know you assisted the French spy whom I was about to shoot down. He is the same man you aided to escape from Luxembourg the night of our occupation. If Miss Cameron's name were not connected with the affair, I should order the court-martial without delay. As it is, I may not."

"I think you are taking a good deal for granted," returned Morgan. "How do you know the aviator was a French spy, or even the same man? You have no proof that it was even the same aëroplane. If you have none, as I assume, what, then, becomes of this second charge? No, general, I was charged by Major von Graf with stealing your busby. That was why I was detained when near Givet. Miss Cameron was deprived of my automobile and left without any



protection whatever. I went out to help her get away. She managed it. You shot me. I may be a young American barbarian, playing tennis when I should be practicing with foils, perhaps. But I am not deceived by this sophistry. I see where you stand. But where do I get off?"

Over Von Hollman's face came another of the flashing changes that Morgan had grown to know. Had the German officer been thinking of him or his affairs at all—or of some one else? There was no one else, save Charlotte Cameron. Healy was negligible. The watching man felt a slow chill creeping over him.

What did Von Hollman's curious expression signify? Could it be that Charlotte was not safe? It was almost unthinkable—yet possible. With Healy blotted out and Morgan immured indefinitely in a military prison, if Charlotte had not escaped, who would protect her now?

During the eternity that seemed to intervene before the German general replied, the steady footfall of the sentry outside the house ticked off the ghostly moments, like the pendulum of a clock.

"I think there is an alternative," said Von Hollman finally.

The words were like a cold douche to Morgan. He straightened up and watched the count.

"The Fatherland, as I have said, needs every man, and you are a skillful surgeon. Although I

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MORGAN RECOVERS FROM WOUND

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may not permit you to go on through the lines, after what has happened, I may ask if you will be willing to aid our wounded instead of going back to Spandau. Of course, you will be under guard, unless you prefer to give me your parole not to try to escape."

Morgan did not hesitate.

"Thank you," he said. "I shall be very glad to give you my word, and I'll do all I can to help the wounded."

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## CHAPTER XX

### VORWAERTS !

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**M**ORGAN was a marvel of speed and skill, and as compassionate as a woman. He worked unremittingly. If the eccentric but occasionally scrupulous Von Hollman had suddenly annulled the physician's parole within a week following the latter's acceptance of it, and ordered Von Graf to proceed with the court-martial he had threatened, Von Graf could only have carried out the order over the protests and possible mutiny of the German physicians of the hospital corps.

The second week would have found the wounded themselves resisting had such a monstrous suggestion been rumored, and by the end of the third no more popular man was following in the wake of the division to which the young American had been detailed.

There were two reasons for this. Charlotte was safe, and Healy, who had unaccountably dropped out of sight, bobbed up serenely one morning driving an armored car, the same assured,

jaunty, impudent Irishman of old, obliterating Morgan's last anxiety.

"Hello, doc," grinned Healy as the machine pulled up near the field hospital. Morgan, extracting a bullet from the shoulder of a wounded prisoner, looked up, delighted. "I've been scout-in' around for you ever since we got parted. You're lookin' fine."

"Glad to see you, Healy. Where have you been?" said Morgan, carefully adjusting a bit of sterilized gauze over the bullet puncture.

Healy waved an indefinite arm. "Everywhere," said he. "I'm drivin' for his nibs. But I heard a lot about you from different parties. You seem to have quite a pull with the sachems of this outfit. Where's Miss Cameron?"

Morgan contented himself with saying Charlotte was somewhere in France. Healy whistled softly.

"I guessed right," said he. "The general got awful nice to me after they held us up that last time. So that's why—he's overplayed his hand and he's tryin' to square himself. Well, here he comes. See you again, doc."

He whirled away in the car, pushing on toward the front, where the victorious arms of the Fatherland were crushing by sheer weight of numbers the left flank of the Allies. Morgan rather envied the lad. Flexible and with a mental energy that quickly assimilated his changed surroundings,

the war was already an old story to the ebullient Healy.

Things were different with his employer. He was of finer clay, and although he had plenty to do owing to three weeks of the most confused and bloody fighting which the world ever imagined, nevertheless Morgan could not help seeing much of the wrack and rapacity of war, aside from the streams of wounded and dying men to whom he ministered.

Indisputably, thus far, the victory was with the Germans. They had whirled across Belgium, following the fall of Namur and Liège, and struck at the comparatively unprotected French frontier on the northeast. Mons, Amiens, Lille, Arras had been already overrun, paying heavy ransom to their conquerors, and, from the gossip about him, Morgan gathered that the battles on the Russian frontier also gave no cause for German pessimism.

From the frequent conferences of the commanders of the various army corps he judged the next step was now under consideration and probably intended to be a smashing blow—the end for which all along they had been preparing.

It so happened, just then, that the hospital division to which Morgan was attached was waiting for orders for its next move forward. He thoroughly cleansed and packed his instruments, looked over his supplies, and sat down for a smoke. It was one of the rare moments, during daylight

hours, when he had been given a respite from the arduous and unending labors which the constant fighting entailed.

Just beyond lay a great line of intrenchments. Only that morning the Allies had held the same ditch. Now, crumpled up, rolled back, and, although fighting with sullen and dogged determination, they were again being driven south. The irresistible right wing of the great German military machine was sweeping around from the northeast for another blow.

The fighting was tremendously savage at times, especially when the German infantry advanced. The French, furious at the invasion through neutral Belgium, were so courageous that they were foolhardy. They became maniacs in the numberless encounters, and once Morgan heard a group of officers discussing an incident where a few score zouaves had refused to obey the commands of their officers to retire. Instead they abandoned the intrenchments they had been holding and charged an entire brigade.

Not one man was left alive or uninjured.

"And they had been told to retreat," said Morgan's informant. "If those fellows would only be amenable to discipline, they'd whip us. But they won't. They cannot stay in the trenches without food or water and endure being shot to bits by shrapnel. They must have action—and

there is where they have always been at our mercy."

"You forget Napoleon," said Morgan.

"On the contrary, I remember him very well. But he was a Corsican—not a Frenchman. And if you will look at his victories, they were won by the same methods the French are using to-day—which are obsolete. The Fatherland has made warfare a study, a science, and reduced it to exact terms. The French, for all their unbounded courage, can no more win from Germany to-day than three times six can make seventy-two. It is a matter of mathematics—not a matter of emotions or traditions."

There was much food for thought in the statement, as Morgan came to know. The German private soldier never did anything except what he was told to do. He was not even permitted to think for himself. On one occasion the field hospital, although originally some four miles back of the battle line, was in danger from a charge by the enemy. Fleeing German soldiers fell back and back and back, until to the disgusted American doctor they appeared arrant cowards. Then, to his surprise, they turned face, fought back over and regained the ground they had already once won. It perplexed him exceedingly, until he learned that almost every officer of the regiment which had been driven back was either killed or wounded.

"Orders," sententiously explained a young Bavarian surgeon, who appreciated both Morgan's surgical skill and his choice of tobacco. "The men had no choice except to fall back until they reached the reserves. You observed, did you not, that the officers of the reserves led them out the second time?"

That was the secret of the German success thus far—preparedness, overwhelming numbers, and discipline. The human beings who sat back of the battle line and received the reports of the aëroplane scouts by wireless, thought no more of sending a thousand or ten thousand other human beings to annihilation to gain a coveted military objective than they did of drinking a cup of coffee.

Revolting and unspeakably cruel as the war was, Morgan could not help admiring the tremendous strategy which made the continued victories possible. As for the privates, they had no choice. They went into position singing, and they went to their deaths with a stoicism not usually ascribed to men of Occidental birth.

Behind them, as Morgan knew, lay stricken Belgium, and this part of France was also far different from the smiling country they had found on entering it. Civilization had become desolation. Cities, scarred and scorched by the terrible artillery fire of the invaders; peasants, wounded, starving, timorously peering from the wrecks of their homes; endless streams of fugitives of all



ages and conditions; devastated crops, desecrated churches—the ashes typifying the ruin of all that men held worth while—and always, just a few miles ahead, the mighty rumble of the war machine!

“Good afternoon, doctor,” said a voice.

Morgan roused from his reverie. General von Hollman was looking over at him with dancing eyes.

“You remind me of the painting, ‘Marius at the Ruins of Carthage,’ ” went on the German. “What’s on your mind?”

“Oh, I guess pretty much the same that was on the gentleman’s you mentioned, only Marius was rather a piker compared to you fellows.”

Von Hollman laughed boyishly.

“Doctor, I’m afraid you’ve been working too hard. I didn’t make a condition of your parole that you were to exhaust yourself entirely. Suppose, instead, you take a ride out to the lines with me? We’re going to have rather an interesting time in the next twenty-four hours.”

They walked back toward Von Hollman’s automobile.

“This is very kind of you, general,” said Morgan as they rolled away. “But what do you mean by a very interesting time?”

The old, peculiar, inscrutable look flitted for an instant over the German’s face. Morgan saw in him, just then, a strong resemblance to the

man he had seen on his arrival at the Château des Herthereux. It brought back vividly their first meeting and the animosity which he had felt subsequently.

Somehow, during the three weeks since Charlotte's escape, the young American had lost much of his first feeling of rancor toward Otto von Hollman. Since Miss Cameron's spectacular disappearance, Von Hollman also had undergone a noticeable change. He had become decidedly more genial. The activity of the German forward movement had revealed a different individual and one far more admirable. There could be no denying his sincerity, his uncommon ability, and his all-dominant love of the Fatherland. His voice even shared the change. It was magnetic, and carried the young American along as swiftly as the machine they occupied.

"The real battle is coming now," said Von Hollman.

Morgan stared.

"The others didn't altogether impress me as being insignificant," he crisply returned.

"Merely incidental, doctor, to our real purpose. Do you remember my toast in the château that afternoon we met? I dare say you thought me a rather mysterious sort of a chap, eh? 'To the day!' Well, it's here, although not just in the way I expected."

He grew silent for a little space. Morgan

studied Healy's familiar hunched shoulders in front. Everything was much as it had been after they left Luxembourg, only Charlotte, instead of Von Hollman, had been with him, and this was a different machine. They had come several miles, and still there was an absence of the customary sounds of battle; the country about them, while more thickly settled and flatter in contour, recalled the day of their dash into the Ardennes.

Then, without warning of any kind, a sound altogether new thundered in his ears. It was a terrifying, rumbling roar, very close, and the swirl of the air over their heads was so violent that his hat leaped upward. Morgan grasped it with a subconscious movement as different from his ordinary efforts as the uncanny spell which seemed to have come over Von Hollman.

The German turned to him with a smile.

"Some guns, those beautiful Berthas of ours, doctor. That was one of the shells. You'll hear the report after a little. The range from the position of the battery was about eight or nine miles. Some pointer will get a ragging from his lieutenant presently. It is bad enough for the enemy to be shooting at us. Our own men ought to know better."

"But we weren't in any danger," retorted Morgan a little anxiously. "It was too high."

"Doctor, you will not, I am sure, be offended if I observe that you are, at times, a singularly

ingenuous person? When I said 'us' I was thinking of the men in the line. Can you see yourself chatting with me after checking, amidships, let us say, a shell sixteen inches in diameter and six feet long?"

A terrific detonation, far, far beyond them, drowned his voice. Morgan shuddered. The shell had burst about a mile ahead. Rocks, earth, fragments of trees, and a great eddy of slow-circling smoke billowed up into the air.

"Yes, but where are the troops—I haven't seen a man yet."

"Over there."

Following the direction of the finger, the American saw only a green ridge of the range of hills in front of them quivering. The whole crest was perturbed as if it, too, had caught the horrid infection of war, and was about to rend itself apart.

"You remember also, doctor, my poking fun at your tennis and golf? And applying the word barbarian to both the Americans and English? I must have seemed a very insolent person, and that is one reason why I wanted you to come with me this afternoon. I wanted *you* to see this thing just as *I* saw it back there in the château."

"But the men?" persisted Morgan.

He was keenly alive to the necessity of not reopening old sores. For a moment he wondered if Von Hollman, with his capricious ideas, had schemed to get him out of sight of the members

of the hospital corps to force him into the duel which he had once declined.

"Those are the men, doctor. While you Americans played baseball and the English played cricket—and you both played tennis as frantically as if the fate of nations depended upon it—we played our game—the 'kriegspiel,' preparing against 'the day.' Those are the picked men of the line. The reason you cannot see them, although they have been pointed out to you, is that they wear the *hecht-grau* uniform. Even their familiar spiked helmets—*pickelhaube*—are covered with cloth of the same material as their uniforms. See how they blend into the ground? It was a German who solved that priceless secret of military strategy—concealing a man even when in plain view."

They drew up at the summit of a hill a little higher than the others. The staff officers, including Von Graf, whom Morgan had not seen for weeks, were chatting and watching the general advance.

The former judge advocate of the court-martial scrutinized Morgan coldly, but his bow was respectful if not cordial.

Morgan returned it with a formality in kind. Evidently, in spite of Von Graf's habitually leaden quality of countenance, he was surprised to see the young American there.

The machine rolled back down the hill a short

distance, while Morgan, at Von Hollman's bidding, walked forward to the bomb proof and stationed himself in one of the chairs.

It was almost like being invited out on the deck of a big seagoing yacht to observe some interesting bit of shore scenery. He wondered more and more at the extreme affability which Von Hollman had exhibited. Had the German officer been on his way to church to marry Charlotte he could not have been more amiable. There might be something back of all this courtesy.

Morgan could not drown the little imp of dubiety that danced through his brain, even as Von Hollman, tendering the glass the orderly had respectfully handed him a moment before, indicated the signs, which, to his own practiced eye, disclosed the battle line so far as the turning movement was concerned.

"The Zeppelin has given us the range," muttered Von Hollman. "Watch the poor fellows scamper out in a minute or two. This is the same way it has been ever since Von Kluck's division came up through Belgium. We were delayed there, else I would now be inviting you to share a bottle of burgundy on the Boulevard des Capucines. Foolish people, those Belgians! I'm sorry for the women and children and aged people. But they would have it. Ah! There they go!"

A squadron of cavalry was galloping along a

road on another hill at their extreme right. Morgan knew from the position of the sun that they were facing almost due south. There had been a series of mysterious signals from the Zeppelin, and a big two-seated monoplane with a short, wicked-looking rapid-fire gun mounted pivotwise on the passenger seat, buzzed over them, circled, and came down.

Von Hollman excused himself, and walked back to the knot of officers, among whom was Von Graf. The pilot, grime-stained, his forehead and its shock of yellow hair dripping oil from the exhaust of the engine, saluted smartly.

They chatted a few moments in rapid German. Then, at another order from Von Graf, a boyish-faced officer at the wireless instruments leaped to his feet, saluted, and raced down the hill as Von Hollman came back to sit down again by Morgan.

"Their wireless-battery's outfit is exhausted," said he, "so they came in to report in person. They have been all the way to Paris, tossed a few bombs, dropped an ultimatum, fought off three French machines, and returned with a bully report. Already the people are fleeing the city. Let them go—Germany is not fighting women and children—it's the men we're after."

"They flew over Paris, you said?" stammered Morgan. Something was clutching at his heart.

Von Hollman's laugh had in it a certain diabolic quality, he fancied.

"Why not?" he asked. "There's where we are bound for. England will come next. They are rushing troops, so the pilot reports, to help meet our advance. Well, let them come. He flew so low he could hear the 'skirling'—I believe that's the phrase, isn't it?—of the bagpipes of one of the Scottish regiments. We'll let the guns answer them—first. Then it will be hand to hand, and the hour for which Germany has waited is here, Doctor Morgan."

The physician could not reply. It was not of England's military prowess he was thinking just then, but of Charlotte.

"That river, over there," went on Von Hollman, almost frantically, it seemed to his listener, "do you know what that is? It is the Marne. History will probably give this big battle that name—the battle of the Marne, quite euphonious, eh?"

Morgan raised his glass. Whatever his fears, he must smother them. It certainly seemed that nothing could check that marvelous, perfectly disciplined, overwhelming German onslaught. Emotionless as the indifferent staff officers behind him, and as relentless, it was sweeping on and on and on. He was looking upon the mathematics of war, the integers of which were invisible. The personal equation had forever fled. What mattered valor, courage, and desperate resolve to die rather than retreat against this gigantic, irresistible



tible machine? For years it had been building. For its perfection the industries of millions had been taxed to the utmost farthing. For this had the sun shone, the crops grown, the looms rattled; for this had the vitals of science been probed for the deep-seated mysteries of nature; for this were lives tossed into the arena like poker chips by a drunken gambler.

Morgan looked again through the binoculars Von Hollman had handed him.

Already the cavalry were far out in front, and now the half-invisible blotches of infantry were trekking along the same road; as he watched they had gained the east side of the Marne. The pontoons were shaping on the banks; the men working on them were dropping like flies; others leaped from the trees to take their places, and still others, and yet again still others.

Whenever a man dropped another took his place. Boats were swinging into the river. The clamor of guns, which until now he had not heard at all, broke out with renewed vigor. The great Zeppelin moved sluggishly over toward the opposite bank. A tall building crashed down. The deadly macarite was driving out the defenders from the cardboard refuges into which they had retreated.

Even the phlegmatic Von Graf, Morgan saw, was intensely excited. His cold, bluish face was wet with perspiration. There was no hint of

sympathy for the dead and dying in his eyes as he lowered the glasses and fixed his gaze momentarily on Morgan.

"Flanders, Picardy, Artois, and Champagne—those are the fields we drove them over," Von Hollman's voice came, apparently from a long way off. "Meaux and Lagny are over there. They can hear our field guns in the Parisian cafés right now. It is 1870 over again—in spite of Belgium, and not at all bad for a month of fighting. Well, have you seen enough?"

Morgan pulled himself together.

"Outside of those poor devils down on the river there isn't much to see," said he. "This would be paradise, General, for men of my profession after your army has passed, if we could collect the usual fees from the patients."

Whatever transpired, he must treat it casually. The two questions he had been asking himself for some moments now were thudding at his brain with the jarring insistence of a dentist's drill at a tooth. What was Von Hollman's motive in bringing him out here? And, despite what he had himself beheld, was Charlotte really able—in all this frightful wreckage of customs, institutions, and normalities of civilized living—to get safely through to Calais or Havre?

Morgan did not see the curious look of triumph with which Von Hollman watched him. Perhaps it was as well. There was something in the Ger-

man's gaze that would have recalled their first encounter at the "Waldmeister bowl," and yet something new and even more puzzling.

But Morgan's vision was introspective. He was trying to picture what the conditions were when Etienne Martin had landed. The telegraph operator, whose consuming ambition had burned its way through all barriers until he had become an expert aviator, was no ordinary man. The hope which his skill and dash had communicated to Morgan that last morning, back near Givet, was with the young American still. Martin possessed the true fortitude of soul with which heroes are endowed, else he would have never pinned his faith to the unseen chances of an aviator's hazardous career. Also he was a typical Frenchman—the kind which brings down fire from heaven in an emergency.

Besides all of that, he had a still greater reason for preserving Charlotte. Gratitude is still more than a phrase in France, and but for Charlotte's fiancé, Martin's rise from the earth would have been at the end of a rope.

Therefore, it seemed quite reasonable to believe that the little aviator had certainly seen to it that Charlotte was safely within the French lines; and Charlotte herself was equally certainly a girl of sufficient good sense and force of character to make her way out of the danger zone.

The little imp of doubt sprang up again.

But were conditions such that she could? What unknown difficulties had sprung up with which a girl might not be able to cope? Society had fallen apart—that is, that for which the name is generally accepted to stand. Only the shell of it remained. The rights of individuals were a memory—the shell of the state was the supreme fact. Charlotte had passports, money; but, for that matter, so had the marooned people in Luxembourg for whom Robert Cameron was probably still caring.

What, then, must things be like in Paris, or the surrounding country? Had Charlotte, with true feminine perversity, foolishly awaited his own coming? It would not be altogether unlike her. He hoped she had not, for, in the event Von Hollman's confident assertion that Paris would be taken in a couple of days was realized, there might be new complications—and more formidable ones, perhaps.

The top of the protected hill was the last place in the world that Morgan would have occupied just then had he been free to choose. It was peopled not alone with the hobgoblins of his growing uneasiness. Von Hollman also was a sneering devil, taunting him at his elbow—but why?

He tried to reason it out impersonally. But his professional instinct was gone. He was the lover—not the physician.

Then he heard Von Graf's hoarse cry of tri-

umph, and the little flag lieutenant out on the parapet turned exultantly, whistling softly but melodiously the same song that Morgan had heard the night before his court-martial—"Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles!"

Mechanically Morgan raised his glasses. He had come out here, a man privileged above any other civilian in the world, to watch the unprecedented spectacle of the decisive battle his host had mentioned. Instead of the marvelous panorama he had expected to see, he was merely sitting with a knot of unconcerned men on a dirt-crowned parapet, watching a mass of less fortunate men now rushing across the pontoon on the Marne, and fighting for a toehold on the farther bank. Compared to the pictures of great battles he had seen in the art galleries of the Continent it was like going to a paper mill at home and watching the logs go in one end of the building and the bundles of paper come out at the other.

All of the bloodshed, the hand-to-hand contests, the shouts of the living, the moans of the dying, were hidden from his eyes and muffled from his ears. He saw the ends sought to be achieved. The very men who planned them did not trouble themselves to look upon the means, save when they could not avoid it.

To such base uses had come all the heritage of the dead past, all the conscious realities of the

present—a knot of jubilant men on a tawdry, rock-crowned hill.

Morgan recalled the platitudes he had heard regarding “patriotism.” Once they had thundered to his ears, filling his soul with ardent resolves, kindling in him the loftiest and most inspiring emotions.

Now they seemed to have been transmuted into meanness, cowardice, and fraud, and the immortal deeds of heroic history were deluding myths.

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## CHAPTER XXI

### THE BATTLE AT THE FISH PONDS

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**G**ENERAL VON HOLLMAN was careful to repress outward signs of his own jubilation at the success of the turning movement, but Morgan, nevertheless, detected it in the carefully modulated invitation to accompany the staff officers to their new position.

His own depression had been so pronounced that it left him calm and stoical. With humanity at the mercy of the merciless he stood like a surgeon looking at a dying man. France was reeling back, mortally wounded.

In such a time his professional instinct was always more alert, and the young American, in the interim until the string of armored automobiles moved forward, began again his dissection of this inscrutable young man where he had left off the analysis at the Château des Herthereux, a month before.

Von Hollman's first words startled him out of his thought.

"I know where there are some bully fish in a pond over there, doctor. What do you say to a mess for dinner?"

"Are you thinking of going after them yourself?"

"Why not?" The tone of amused contempt was too plain to be misunderstood. "Those poor devils have got enough for to-day. And to-morrow we'll drive them into Paris."

"I think a change of diet would be very welcome. How far are they from here?"

"Just over the river—you can see the ponds once we get in among the trees on the west bank."

It struck Morgan that Von Hollman's remark a while back regarding details was not an empty boast, and he commented on it in a casual way. His companion seemed pleased at the observation.

"We have known, of course, for a very long time that Germany must eventually fight France and England, Russia probably—and, but for a fortunate thing which no human foresight could anticipate, possibly our present ally, Austria."

"You amaze me," said Morgan.

"Of course. That was another reason for my using the term barbarian the day we met. The world does not comprehend anything of the extent of Germany's readiness. I ask you, doctor,



could we have done what we have without intellect?"

"Certainly not. But may not intellect, in its highest sense, be devoted to nobler aims?"

"Undoubtedly. But Germany must have room. We are no larger than France. Yet we have many millions more of people. How could we expand? Look at the events of recent years and you will see why we were forced to fight—to live. Therefore, we prepared. In war, ethics are theories. Batteries, not books, win battles. We shall be assailed for winning, but our revilers do not yet know that the foundations for our heaviest artillery were laid in time of peace."

Morgan saw they were already at the edge of the Marne. Sturdy soldiers, standing, waist-deep in the water on either side, minimized the sway of the pontoons as the heavy vehicles crossed. Here and there on the banks was a ghastly heap—what had once been a soldier of the Fatherland.

Morgan shifted his shudder into a pretended yawn, glancing sidewise at Von Hollman's face. It was pale, but still wore the characteristic look of confident pride.

Leaving the preparation of the new staff headquarters to his subordinates, Von Hollman directed his chauffeur to push on. The cavalry was deploying over the fields several miles ahead. More troops were pouring in behind them, and

field batteries were taking up new positions. The retreating enemy was resisting stubbornly, but the Zeppelin was signaling constant changes of range to the enormous siege guns on the farther bank, besides pouring deadly shells into whatever cover the fugitives sought in which to make still another of the endless and stubborn stands that a rear guard makes to cover the retirement of an army corps.

"If I were a French general," said Von Hollman, "I wouldn't mind being driven back, but I surely would be thoroughly mortified at losing a supper of splendid fish." He pointed toward a sheet of water screened by poplars. "Doctor, do they bite well toward sundown or before a rain? I guess we're in for a wetting to-morrow."

There was a chorus of lusty cheers as he stepped from the automobile. A regiment of Prussian infantry, marching with swinging stride, flashed helmets aloft on bayonets at the sight of their general. The spontaneous tribute seemed to touch him. His own hand went up smartly in salute, and although his face was cold and proud there was a mist in his eyes.

Morgan's first uneasy feeling that Von Hollman might be tempting fate overmuch died away. The artillery was sending a hissing rain of shells over their heads, demolishing the woods beyond the cavalry screen. How men could still find heart to fight against such overwhelming odds—

not alone of numbers, but of science—was beyond him. The cavalry and the infantry were now between them and the scattered remnants of the once indomitable French army corps. It would seem that they were, after all, quite safe; besides Von Hollman should know—he knew everything, even to details.

“Come on, doctor,” cried the count. “Let me see if your claim to be a sportsman is, after all, justified. Try this net—I packed it in my kit before leaving Luxembourg, expressly for use here.”

His boyish enthusiasm was more pleasing than his cold discourses on the best way to kill a given number of men in the shortest time, and Morgan accepted with alacrity.

“Would you mind bringing a few crumbs? There is some lunch under the seat.” Von Hollman was walking along the side of the pond, with an eye to some particular spot.

Morgan complied, scattering the fragments on the surface of the water, just now lighted with a sunset that would have been most beautiful were it not for the war. The crimson rays threw great sheets of red across the landscape; the scarlet of the falling leaves bravely flaunted their colors as if flinging back a message to the source of their life; a heavenly calm settled down, for an imperceptible instant, over the little pond, and even the great guns, miles behind, stilled their hoarse uproar.

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## THE BATTLE AT THE FISH PONDS

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That hour of dusk on that evening was one that Morgan was to remember for a long time. As the sun set the sounds of war died away completely. The historic fish ponds of St. Estephe, built and stocked forgotten centuries ago by pious monks, were fringed and masked by tall, slim poplars. Elsewhere the poplars had been swept down by artillery fire, but here they stood, still and spectral, against the darkening sky. Von Hollman caught his fish with the net, and his orderly cooked them, and after supper, which Morgan shared with him, they sat there, watching the shimmer of the stars in the gleam of the water. Once a major riding past saluted Von Hollman and suggested that the point he had chosen for a bivouac was not of the safest.

"You are beyond our outposts," he said. "Our cavalry scouts have been drawn in."

Von Hollman laughed. "It is safe," he said. "The Allies have gone. When we marched by night, did we not find them fleeing before us? Perhaps when the moon rises we shall march again."

The major withdrew, evidently dissatisfied, and a short time later a company of infantry of the line passed them and speedily intrenched themselves on the other side of the screen of poplars.

"They are anxious for my safety," said Von Hollman, "but I, somehow, feel that I am not to die till I see Paris first. And in the meantime,

since we have conquered part of France, we shall drink some of the wine of France."

He called his orderly, and he and Morgan pledged each other in burgundy.

The wine had come from the cellar of one château, and the goblets were part of the service of another. Watching the dark face of the count in the flickering light of a lantern, Morgan reflected that war was much the same through all the ages. So he might have sat and drunk the wine of the conquered country had he followed the eagles of Cæsar, or the standards of Clovis or Charlemagne or the battle flags of Tilly or Wallenstein; and so, countless times this same country had been wasted, by Roman, by Hun, by Frank, by Norman, by English, only to grow anew into fresh greenness and beauty, only to raise once again its vineyards, its temples, and palaces.

Von Hollman was in a discursive, happy sort of mood. Morgan had once had a Scotch nurse who told him that people were "fey"—talkative and happy to an unusual degree—always when the hour of death was close upon them. The memory of it came back to him now. It seemed that Von Hollman was "fey." Morgan had never known him so winning, so ingratiating, so sparkling. He asked hundreds of questions about America and discussed its future. Before Morgan knew it he was telling Von Hollman the

whole story of his own life, and Von Hollman was listening, apparently spellbound.

"You Americans," he sighed at length. "Perhaps it was so with us when the first Teutons came from the north. Perhaps then there was the same freedom, the same hope, the same sense of irresponsibility. But now—the humblest American is a happier and freer man than a prince of the blood in Germany."

He rose up, and strode to and fro.

"We are friends to-night," he said, turning suddenly and facing Morgan.

"I hope so."

"We may be enemies again some time, but it is well to remember this one night."

The sun had set long ago, and it was hours till moonrise. Von Hollman's figure was just a darker shadow against the dark of the poplars and the night beyond. Suddenly his form drew erect and tense, and from some premonition that he has never been able to understand, Morgan also leaped to his feet, filled with a sense of danger, of danger that seemed to be lurking somewhere to the south, beyond the screen of poplars.

They had heard no sound as yet. The intrenched outpost beyond them was absolutely still and quiet. For a tense moment they stood there, shoulder to shoulder, German and American both trying to pierce the gloom beyond. There was a sudden cry in German, the flash and crack of a

rifle, and then an unearthly outburst of sound: a crashing volley, a shrill, piercing yell, hoarser, deeper shouts in German, and a scattering fire just beyond the poplars.

Von Hollman started forward, half drawing his sword, but before he had taken a step the inclosure about the fish ponds was filled with struggling, fighting men and lit with the flash of their weapons. What was left of the German outpost came staggering back to the edge of the water and driven into it by the onrush of the attacking force. Fighting hard with butt and bayonet, dropping one by one, but steadily falling back, knee deep, breast high, struggling and slipping in the water. An instant later came an avalanche of men, a dark bolt tipped with bright steel and yellow flashes of fire. Above the shattering outburst of their rifle fire sounded the shrill, terrific din of their yelling. They were Highland soldiers, kilted and bare-kneed. After the first volley they fired but seldom, but thrust with the bayonet and swore like fiends in a mad abandon of fighting fury. Splashing across the pond they came, catching the retreating Germans in the flank, and for a few moments which seemed hours, the fish ponds, so peaceful a short time before, were turned into a ghastly pandemonium.

Morgan saw Von Hollman's sword flash out and strike again and again. Through the trees he could hear further shrill yells and the loud, amaz-

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## THE BATTLE AT THE FISH PONDS

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ing drone and neighing of bagpipes. A lieutenant and a squad of men had rallied suddenly around Von Hollman and himself. The lieutenant emptied his automatic and flung it in the face of a giant with bare knees. His hand went to his sword, but he was too late. The bayonet of the Highlander met him full in the chest, and when he drew it forth again the lieutenant was dead on his feet. As he fell so three others fell, and Morgan and Von Hollman were in the thick of the press. A rifle butt caught Von Hollman across his chest. He dropped to his knees and fell backward. Over him stood another barelegged man with rifle upraised, the bayonet descending on his breast.

The same instinct that had made him turn aside the charge of the uhlan in Luxembourg dominated Morgan now. His hands were grasping the barrel of the rifle, trying to twist the steel of the bayonet away from Von Hollman's breast. As he struggled with the Highlander some one else fired between them so that the powder scorched Morgan's face. Another rifle butt swept down, striking him on the head, pitching him forward, senseless, across the body of the Prussian he had tried to save.

The battle of the fish ponds was over. Already the cannon of the Germans could be heard again. Already bugles and rifle shots told that their main column was coming up to the support



of the surprised and raided outpost. British officers were calling in their men, calling them in, urging them to hurry. The raiding party had delivered its stroke. It was the business of the rear guard to delay the German advance and to drive in outposts whenever possible. Above the fish ponds machine guns and fieldpieces were wheeling into place, and as the British withdrew, leaving Highlander and German piled together about the still pond, they opened fire and swept the glade with a rain of lead and steel.

The battle of the fish ponds was the slightest episode in a long retreat. The officer who had led the attackers made the briefest report of his exploit, and it was not even mentioned in the general report of Sir John French. It had turned the peaceful spot into a shambles, and it played its little part in the long campaigns of the Marne and the Aisne. For an hour the plunging fire of the artillery continued, for an hour searchlights from armored motor and air craft searched the hills beyond. Regiments of tired troops were called out far to left and right, and the sullen, intermittent roar of guns to the south told where the enemy were slowly retiring.

Undiscovered, as if dead, Morgan and Hollman lay beside the fish ponds.

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## CHAPTER XXII

### “THE PATHS OF GLORY”

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**T**HE moon had risen high long before Morgan had recovered consciousness. A thin, white mist drifted up from the winding valley of the Marne, and when he rose slowly to his feet he looked about him, through a silvery haze that made things seem unreal without hiding them. He looked out now on what seemed a new world. The poplar trees were gone. The fire of the machine guns, like the scythe of a giant reaper, had shorn them off about six feet from the ground, leaving rows of blackened stumps behind. Gone forever were the fish ponds of the monks of St. Estephe. More than one shell had burst in them, the dam had been broken, the ancient walls shattered, and all that was left was a muddy hole where a small stream trickled. Beyond the rows of stumps were the trenches filled with dead. Near him was an automobile turned on its side, burned and twisted beyond repair. On all sides lay the dead. Mostly they were Germans, but here and

there the bare knees and mustached face of a dead Highlander showed that the raiders had suffered as well. Beside him, shot through the heart, lay the soldier whose bayonet had threatened Von Hollman. It may have been the flicker of moonlight, but it seemed as if there were a faint, contented smile on the dead face.

With head still ringing and bewildered, he turned to Von Hollman, who lay face upward. He bent over him. Von Hollman had been shot through the body—the rifle that had been fired close to Morgan's face in the last struggle had done the business—but his heart was still beating. Morgan rose hurriedly, his mind clearing. His training as a doctor furnished him with an instinct that guided him as well as reason. Not far off through the mist he heard voices, and going forward saw at last a man wearing the unmistakable brassard of the Red Cross. He called to him, and a moment later Von Hollman—all that was left of him—was on a stretcher, and Morgan, who had been stunned, but was little hurt, was being cared for and plied with restoratives. The recent weeks had made many friends for him, especially among the officials of the Red Cross.

The old stone *poste restante* that stood at that time on the banks of the Marne had been there for centuries, but it is there no longer. This battle had spared it with its torrent of steel; but another battle—when the armies fared differently

—and the old edifice, sturdy stone, vine-covered, was gone.

It was in a room on the ground floor of this ancient inn that Von Hollman was laid, and it was to that room, hours later, well toward morning, that Morgan was summoned.

He found the count propped up in bed, but even if his examination on the battlefield had not told him that Von Hollman's sands were running short in the glass of life, one glance at his countenance was enough to say so now. Other hands as skillful as Morgan's had bound him—the best medical skill of the army of invasion had been summoned, but a Prussian general—indeed if all that had been hinted to Morgan were true, something more than a Prussian general and nobleman—had received his deathblow in a trifling skirmish of outposts, not worth chronicle in the history of battle. A chance bullet, fired by an unknown private, and Von Hollman's brilliant mind had only a few more hours to flicker; and his scheming ambition had planned in vain.

The officers on either side of the old four-poster bed drew back at a wave from Von Hollman's hand as Morgan entered the room.

“Come, American,” said Von Hollman. “Come close to me. I have not long to live and not much breath to waste.”

“I am sorry,” said Morgan simply.

“Indeed, I believe you are!” Von Hollman's

cheek was pale, but his eyes were bright. "I saw you, my friend, grasp at the rifle with your big hands and twist the steel aside from my breast. Had it not been for you, I would not have lived this long. You tried, at the risk of life, to save me. And only a few weeks ago you risked your life to save the spy, Martin—the enemy of the Fatherland. What manner of man are you?"

"I am a surgeon," said Morgan, "not a soldier. My business is to save life, not to take it."

"You are a prisoner of the German army," said Von Hollman. "Suppose I were to say that at my death you would be set free—and that if I lived you were likely to be shot as a spy, would you still have tried to save me in the fight by the fish ponds?"

"I think so," said Morgan.

"Because you are a physician?"

"No; because of no thought or calculation or profession. Because I can't stand by and see a man killed."

"And yet I was your rival and enemy."

"You were my enemy."

There was silence for a moment. The two German officers who were the only witnesses to this strange meeting drew farther back into the shadows. The fire which had been lighted on the broad hearth leaped up into a blaze, then sank again. Von Hollman's thin, tapering fingers played nervously with the signet ring he wore.

“Come, Mr. Morgan,” he said at length. “Do you remember the prinzeßin—the *gnadige fräulein*—Miss Cameron?”

Morgan nodded.

“You loved her, perhaps.”

“Yes,” said Morgan at length.

“I loved her. Could I have held her by force, would you have fought me for her?”

“I might have killed you, perhaps,” said Morgan slowly.

“And yet at another time you try to save my life. Why is it?”

“I might have killed you that night at Givet—to save Charlotte from you—and to save you from yourself.”

“From myself! You think I have a higher and a lower nature?”

“Some doctors might describe it in longer words, but that is what I think.”

Von Hollman’s somber eyes were fixed on the signet ring. The lower nature, the fatal obsession, the insane pride, and the dominant egotism had left him now. The hand of death was already on his brow, and had stricken it away from him.

“You Americans are strange people,” he said; “but you have your own code, and perhaps it is a good one.” He raised himself a little on the pillows. “Doctor Morgan,” he said, “do you know where Charlotte is?”

“In England, I hope.”

Von Hollman signaled with waxy hand. An officer stepped forward, and then drew back again. The door swung open, and a white-clad figure entered the room. It was Charlotte Cameron.

Had she been a ghost Morgan would have been no more surprised, but she was flesh and blood. It seemed the culmination of a terrible and surprising day.

"Fairfax," she said, "it's I, still in the flesh and well—not a ghost."

Morgan glanced back at Von Hollman. The faint shadow of his old satirical smile showed on his face.

"You see, my friend," he said, "I have been deceiving you. Miss Cameron had not escaped the German army, after all. The village she was left in by the French spy was captured by my own army corps, and Miss Cameron has been safe with us ever since."

"And her uncle?"

"Her uncle will be here to-morrow. A message was sent to him an hour ago. For weeks past Miss Cameron has been with the reserve Red Cross. Doctor Morgan—to-night my hour has come and I sent for her."

He dropped back on the pillows. One of the officers stepped forward and motioned imperatively to Morgan, pointing to a table beside the bed. On it lay a hypodermic syringe with the

tubes, containing the strychnine and digitalis and sterilized water.

Morgan administered the drug, and a moment later a faint color showed in Von Hollman's cheeks and his eyes opened again.

“Prinzessin,” he said, “Doctor Morgan, these are my last words. I am not to live till Paris falls the second time. I am not to live till Germany finds her place in the sun, till her colonies circle the globe, till hers is the world language and the world culture. It has been mine to see the vision, to plan, to work for my imperial master, but not to see the fulfillment of the dream—as you shall see it, prinzeßin—and as I hoped to see it with you.”

Charlotte's fair head was bowed a little, and her eyes were misty. Von Hollman watched her. There was nothing of the old egotism and cold passion in his face now, nothing but affection and tenderness.

“Fräulein,” he said, “do you love Doctor Morgan?”

Charlotte nodded, unable to speak.

“Then be happy with him when I am gone. Von Graf has your passports and more besides. You will find the way clear to America. Germany has no quarrel with children. My hour has come. I had hoped much and planned much, but as your English poet says, ‘The paths of glory lead but to the grave.’ Gnadige fräulein!”



"Yes," said Charlotte.

"Would you not come near to me?" Von Hollman's voice was feeble. "And take this ring as a gift and token—to you and to the brave man who twice would have given his life for others, and who shall now give his life in happier fashion to you?"

Charlotte took the ring.

"And would you not let me clasp your hand, prinzeßin, for the river is deep and the water is swift and cold?"

Charlotte's hand caught his.

"*Du bist die ruh*——" Von Hollman's voice faltered and died away. For a time they thought he had fainted or fallen into a slumber, but presently the officer stepped forward, unclasped his hand from Charlotte's, and folded both hands across the breast of his dead prince and general.

He turned to Charlotte and Morgan with a salute.

"Prinzeßin," he said, "and Herr Doctor, quarters have been set apart for you. To-morrow you are to start for Holland."

Charlotte and Morgan left the room together. At the door Charlotte held up the ring Von Hollman had given her and they both looked at it in the lamplight. It was a perfectly plain gold signet. In its head was a crystal stone, engraved with the arms of the family of Hohenzollern.

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### OUT OF THE MAELSTROM

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SO it was that the end of Otto von Hollman, general in the German army, strange descendant of a proud and ancient race, left happier memories and kinder thoughts with both Charlotte and Morgan than they had ever expected to hold for him. His life flickered out at dawn, when vitality is ever at the weakest. Almost at the moment his white hands were folded on his breast, his bugles were awakening his army to another day. Already the Taube *aéroplanes* had taken the air, and soared high in the first rays of sunlight over the winding Marne, already the cavalry outposts, the first thin tentacles of the advancing monster, were pushing east and south, nearer and nearer to terrified Paris. The newly awakened rumble of the great guns reverberating from the low hills of Epernay were the last sounds perhaps which reached his ear. The army for which he had dreamed and worked was still moving south. It had not yet received its first check, and when

Von Hollman died he left Germany serene and triumphant on its march toward its place in the sun.

Morgan and Charlotte, however, were to see no more fighting. Von Hollman's hand seemed as powerful and far-reaching after death as in life; the passports he had left them signed in a feeble scrawl with his own hand were treated with instant respect—even by Von Graf, and his signet ring, the clue to the mystery of his power and identity, made Charlotte an object of almost superstitious awe.

Weak as Von Hollman was from loss of blood, and wrung as he must have been by deadly pain, he left behind him evidences of the thoroughness and clarity of his mind. Whatever had been his plans for the next world he had made an effort, truly heroic, to leave his affairs in this world in good order. A motor car was ready to take Charlotte and Morgan northward, and they were truly surprised and delighted to see Healy on the front seat beside the driver. He had been busy on the inner line of communications of the army and had not even heard of the affair of the fish ponds of St. Estephe. Von Hollman's death was news to him.

"He was a nut," reflected Healy, "but like some nuts, he was clever. But on the level, doc, if he had lived he'd have put you out of the way and Miss Cameron would have had a hard time dodg-

ing him. An' you tried to save his life, eh? Why didn't you let the English kid stick it into him?"

"It's just as well that I didn't," said Morgan. "We wouldn't have had these passports now."

"An' yet they say that self-preservation is the first law of nature," said Healy.

"It was self-preservation to save his life," said Morgan. "After he came to his senses he was a good deal more use to me alive than dead."

"After he came to his senses! An' the only way to bring him to his senses was to kill him. An' so he turns out to be a good, tender-hearted guy, after all. The only trouble with him was that you had to kill him to cure him of what was the matter with him. Say, doc, on the level, it's a queer would!"

They were to meet Mr. Cameron at Mons, in Belgium, where it had been arranged by wire that he was to go by train from Luxembourg, and all the way north their passage lay well within the German lines. A part of Von Hollman's last hour of life had been spent in ordering the messages sent, in ordering the car and chauffeur, and in laying out their route.

Those who have seen the devastation of war in the sun-drenched Mexican deserts or on the dreary wastes of Manchuria, know that it is terrible, but they can form little idea from that of what it has done in Europe. Where Russian and Prussian are facing each other far to the east, the

country is thinly settled and deserted, but this land, through which Morgan and Charlotte now passed, is one of the most fertile, and was once one of the most prosperous countrysides on earth.

It was a land of placid, winding rivers, of rich valleys, of cultivated hillsides, and straight white roads. Before the war it was a place of little villages, busy and prosperous, each with its church spires and public square, shouldering each other so closely as to make it seem one great suburban park. Poplars, tall and slender, once grew along each river bank and on either side of the roads, but now black stumps and an occasional blasted tree showed where the green trees once had been.

The roads themselves had been turned into dusty ruts. Fields defaced with trenches, scarred with shell fire, trampled by regiments of horse and foot, black and desolate, showed nothing of the crop that only that August had been tended with loving care. Some villages had escaped—for war, like a tornado, sweeps away one house and leaves the next—but town after town had been turned into a ruin by artillery fire, with nothing but blackened gables and heaps of brick and stone to show where they once had stood. And along every road and in every field were other evidences of waste and destruction. In the hurry of that first marvelous advance, conqueror as well as conquered left shattered and useless equipment behind them. Helmets rolled by the roadsides,

abandoned artillery wagons and guns out of order lay in the fields, here and there a wrecked automobile and straggling windrows of accouterments showed where some engagement had been fought. After the first few hours they had passed the reserve lines of the advancing army, the sight of which was stirring in its way, but beyond this it was a dreary and saddening journey. Newly made graves with little wooden crosses, frightened and dejected peasants crawling about their ruined fields, and the occasional column of a supply or ammunition train going south—this was all there was to see, and they were glad at last when night came on to shut it from them.

They found Mr. Cameron awaiting them in the little hotel at Mons. The wire from Von Hollman had been the first hint he had received that they were not safely back in the United States. He was overjoyed to see them again, but his duty called him back soon to Luxembourg. Charlotte suggested going back with him, but he was insistent on her getting to America as soon as possible. They breakfasted together, and he heard the story of their attempted escape and of Von Hollman's death. He looked curiously at the ring which Charlotte handed him.

"In Germany," he said, "what the government declares secret is never published—scarce whispered, not even hinted at in most cases. Wear the ring or keep it, but say nothing of why that

shield is cut in the stone, or of what more famous name may be concealed behind Von Hollman's identity. Whether his imperial master is his kinsman or not, he has served him well and died a fitting death."

In Mons and on the journey across to the coast their passports proved as reliable as ever, and as the first rush of homeward-bound Americans had gone, there was little difficulty in getting passage from England.

With ports all covered and no lights showing, their steamer stole out from Southampton, past the Isle of Wight, and headed down the channel. It was a dark and silent channel, but it had its guardians.

First from the right, then from the left came the searchlight of a war vessel throwing its glaring disk over the whole ship and dwelling a moment on the signal flags. To right and to left, for miles across the dark sea, stretched the fleets of France and England, and they knew that there was an even greater fleet in the North Sea watching the German coast.

Europe was dropping far behind them—Europe torn and disfigured and in ruins—and the broad billows and sweeping winds of the western ocean were rushing in to meet them. Battleship after battleship cast its great beam across the two figures on the after deck of the liner, and more than

one young naval officer envied the two lovers, as he thought them.

They were indeed lovers, but it was a silent, still affection that held them beside each other, and thought and memory came so fast that there was little speech between them. They had indeed seen the pride of power and the towering sweep of racial and kingly ambition. But they had also seen the darker side of the picture, the seamy side of the cloth of gold, the rent within the armor. There were homelier, dearer visions—ideals that seemed nobler far than anything that war could ever bring, men of finer mold for all that they wore no crowns or decoration—all the gentler, truer, higher things that the future holds in trust for us were westward somewhere across the dark sea, and westward they were bound.

For the struggling hosts of Europe fate had not yet made the final cast of the dice, nor would not for many a day, but for them was the assurance of peace and happiness.

"So," said Morgan at length, "I am to marry a German princess?"

"No princess," said Charlotte, "just plain American."

"One who wears the signet ring of Hohenzollern."

"No," said Charlotte. "See!" She held the ring, the token of Von Hollman, out over the rail.



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HERE'S TO THE DAY!

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Morgan tried to grasp her arm, but she had thrown the ring from her. It disappeared in the dark. "So much for royal families and princesses," said Charlotte. "It was a wonderful ring, but somehow I'd rather not keep it. I don't think it would bring good luck. And don't you like me at all, just as I am, without the ring? And aren't *you* going to give me a ring. anyway?"

THE END.

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